

THE RUNAWAY;

for paper Rajah. 1827
OR,

THE SEAT OF BENEVOLENCE.

A NOVEL. 1202

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

By MR. SMITH.

Somers, whom misfortunes had humbled till fate could not awe nor death dismay, stood calm as a Christian in the crash of worlds.

VOL. III.

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1800.

THE RUNAWAY;

OR,

1202

THE SEAT OF BENEVOLENCE.

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1202

CHAP. I.

EARLY on the ensuing morning, Augusta set off in a post-chaise for London, accompanied by Ellen.

Sir Thomas remained with Sir Charles chief part of the day on which Augusta left home; but pleading urgent business, he was allowed to depart.

Sir Charles, who was partial to society, now felt his time hang heavy on his hands, nor could his domestic concerns afford

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him



him any happiness. He had been disappointed in his favourite scheme respecting Edward, and had strong reasons to suspect Augusta had fixed her affection on an improper character.

This subject wholly occupied his thoughts; he wished for some friend to whom he could unburthen his mind.

It being a family matter, he could not indulge himself by speaking of it to any person excepting Somers, who had been unavoidably acquainted with these particulars.

After he had breakfasted, on the following morning, he determined to visit him, and relieve his spirits by communicating his ideas on the subject.

When he arrived at Cliffdown-lodge, a servant informed him his master was in the garden.

Somers,

Somers, as usual, was spending a melancholy hour in the temple, and repairing the loss of time occasioned by the events of the preceding week.

Sir Charles, suspecting as much, repaired to the spot, and stole softly in without being observed.

Somers, at that time, had his eyes attentively fixed on the portraits.

In this attitude he sat for some minutes, then, heaving a deep sigh, exclaimed, "Oh! my heart!—when shall it find repose?"

"Never," cried Sir Charles, "while you thus persevere in the indulgence of unavailing sorrow."

Somers started on hearing his voice, and instantly rose from his seat.

"I beg your pardon," resumed Sir Charles, "for thus intruding on your private

private meditations. If I had not considered you an object far too worthy to be lost for the want of a friend, I should not have attempted it. Let me therefore know from whence arises this melancholy, this self-consuming sorrow; perhaps some plan may be devised to lessen it; if not, I should conceive, the participation of it would afford you some ease: at the same time, give me credit when I declare it is not from a motive of idle curiosity that I require it, but from a sincere wish to serve you."

"I thank you," replied Somers, "and am confident your request originates in a desire to restore that peace of mind I have long been a stranger to; and although I am aware it does not lay in your power to render me any assistance, yet I will relate it to you, trusting you will
make

make large allowances for my weakness, as I am inclined to think you will imagine that which oppresses me has its origin in the fatality of my disposition.

“ You, perhaps, are prepared to expect a tale of amazing import; something shocking to nature and unheard of; if that is the case, you will be disappointed.

“ My sorrows arise from a conduct which is too frequently practised in this country; where riches is esteemed the only or chief source of happiness, and for which every connection, however valuable, is sometimes sacrificed.

“ You are a father, and possibly the recital may have a good effect.

“ At an early period of life I placed my attachment on the daughter of a Mr. Sternhold; and, but for some youthful

follies, which came to the knowledge of Louisa, I should have then married her.

“ This placing an obstacle in the way, she refused me.

“ Irritated by this refusal, which I did not think my follies merited, I formed a connection with a lady of Louisa’s acquaintance.

“ This lady, who was married, but separated from her husband, and who enjoyed an independent fortune left her by her father, was by no means inclined to live a life of celibacy ; and I was far too amorously disposed to refuse her offer, but lived with her publicly.

“ My motives for this conduct were chiefly these :—Previous to this step, I acquainted Mrs. Sternhold of the proposal I had received, who, doubting the intelligence, treated it with the utmost contempt ;

tempt; alleging, that she knew the person too well to suppose she would adopt such a line of conduct, and that I had flattered my vanity, or wished to impose on her.

“ This stung my pride, and prompted me to put it in practice.

“ Another, and the more principal, motive was, because I imagined myself slighted by Louisa.

“ This step did not lose me the friendship of Sternhold: I was still a constant visitor at his house, had frequent opportunities of conversing with his daughter, and soon found the spleen I had been exercising redounded equally on myself; as my affection for Louisa was too firmly rooted to be done away.

“ I likewise found myself disgraced in the eye of the world, and shunned by the

female part of society who had the smallest respect for their character.

“ Having seen the error of my conduct, I endeavoured to rid myself of the connection I had so hastily plunged into. I left my house, in which she resided, and gave out I was married; but this had no effect, for being teized by the parties Mrs. —— was acquainted with, I was, by their entreaties, and being of an easy disposition, compelled to submit.

“ Mrs. Sternhold, who beheld my weakness, and who, I am positive, knew my attachment to Louisa, frequently declared I must give up her acquaintance, or relinquish my connection with Mrs. —— . I saw there was no step so likely to bring this about as my marriage.

“ With this intent I removed Mrs. ——
from

from my house in the country to a small house near town, alleging that I preferred spending the winter in London.

“ Having accomplished this, I made proposals of marriage to the Sternholds in behalf of their daughter ; but was greatly surprised on meeting with a refusal.

“ This refusal originated from an addition that was made to their fortune, of an annuity which fell to them, subject to the life of a gentleman aged between sixty and seventy.

“ The annuity was far from being contemptible : they now considered their daughter a match for a person of superior fortune to what I possessed ; but as I had long been in the habit of intimacy with them, and, as I before observed,

they must have known the affection I had for their daughter at a time when, in point of income, I was their superior, they did not think proper to state this as their motive for refusing me, but placed it to the account of the connection I had maintained with Mrs. —.

“ In addition to this refusal I was desired not to repeat my visits.

“ Louisa, whose heart was then fixed on me, unable to sustain this blow, was taken ill, which deprived me of meeting with her for some months; but having partly recovered, we eluded the vigilance of Sternhold, and were married.

“ I now concluded that my happiness was complete; but shortly found the reverse.

“ My estate was at that time mortgaged

gaged to a trustee of Mrs. — for a sum of money that had been expended on improvements.

“ Whether the mortgagee wanted his money, or was offended at my marriage, I cannot determine; but he waited on Sternhold without my knowledge, requesting him to advance the sum and take the mortgage on himself.

“ This was refused; the mortgagee foreclosed, and, by improper means, through securities I had entrusted to him, obtained possession of the estate: to recover it, I commenced a suit in chancery, which drained my purse.

“ The event was, that the mortgagee was compelled to surrender up the estate in six months, upon my paying off the sum.

“ During this period I had permitted

Louisa, who had a strong affection for her parents, to visit them daily ; but they absolutely refused to see me, taking advantage of every misfortune that befel me to inculcate in her mind the necessity there was for her leaving me : and, in order to bring this about, they concluded it would be expedient, first, to lessen her attachment ; as such they averred that fortune was my chief inducement in marrying her, and represented the occurrences which had taken place since that period as corroborative proofs :—that, if I had a sincere regard, I should not have taken her under my circumstances :—that I was actuated by the hope of gain, a desire to possess her person, and likewise to be revenged on them for their refusal.

“ Now, although Sternhold, if he had parted with every thing he possessed at
the

the time I married his daughter, could not have purchased the estate which I relinquished with Mrs. ——, yet did Louisa pay great attention to these specious arguments, and frequently professed to be of the same opinion.

“ This conduct destroyed our domestic felicity ; and as I found it would be impossible to enjoy happiness while they had an opportunity of thus poisoning her mind, I determined to sell my estate, pay the mortgage, and leave England.

“ At this juncture, Sternhold offered to transfer the mortgage to himself.

“ This offer on his part led me to conceive that all animosity would cease ; I therefore gave up my plan of leaving England.

“ Misfortune still pursued me. The title to my estate was disputed ; the event was,

was, that I lost it ; and Sternhold's mortgage becoming of no value, he required a warrant of attorney for the sum, which at his request I executed.

“ During this period Louisa brought me a daughter, the image of herself ; to this child the Sternholds were extremely partial ; but not all their partiality to it was able to remove their fixed inveteracy against its father.

“ They now with safety, having a bond suspended over my head, inculcated to Louisa the necessity there was for a final separation ; called to her mind the various misfortunes I had met with, and laid them down as so many proofs of my guilt :—represented me as a monster not fit to live ; a villain, who had grafted my poverty on their family ; and even so far did their unchristian-like hate carry them,
that

that they declared to Louisa she was looked upon as little better than a prostitute for living with me, in consequence of the connection I had formerly had with Mrs. —; for that my living with her a length of time had made her little less than my wife. As if that, or any other act of mine, could make me the husband of another man's wife who had not been divorced.

“ This language, on their part, evidently lessened Louisa's affection for me.

“ I now saw that she was never so happy as when absent from me. As soon as she had finished her breakfast, she visited them, and remained from me the whole of the day, not returning till the evening.

“ I remonstrated on this practice; but she pleaded as an excuse, that the comforts I had now to afford her were not equivalent

equivalent to what she met at her father's, and that, if I had the sincere affection I professed, I should not wish to deprive her of them.

“ This argument I considered as trifling, well knowing I should not act upon such a principle by her, if our situations were reversed.

“ The evil still continued, and not contented with spending the day, she took all opportunities of sleeping there.

“ I could not but see this change in her conduct with regret, and when I reminded her of it, she fled to the arguments of her parents for refuge, and strongly insisted there was no affection on my side.

“ Unhappily this neglect with which I was treated roused a spirit of jealousy in me.

“ I had been taught that, for the husband

band the wife should leave the father and the mother, and, forsaking all others, cleave to him alone. This led me to conclude, an affection for them, in preference to her husband, was inconsistent with nature; and that the strong fascination which led her always there, must have owed its origin to some other source.

“ Having suffered this idea to take full possession of me, it effectually destroyed my peace of mind.

“ I knew that, when there, she could write letters and receive answers; she could make appointments, and could fulfil them.

“ If I met her walking, she could say she was going to purchase something for her mother;—if she were asked by her parents where she had been, she could reply, on business of her own; and they, concluding

concluding it was on my account, would not investigate it further.

“ I knew her parents had that confidence in her, she could take the utmost latitude without suspicion, and it would be impossible for me to detect it, as I was not permitted to enter their house.

“ When I stated these my doubts, she again declared it was a strong proof I had no affection for her, otherwise I should place in her unlimited confidence.

“ This my jealousy would not permit me to do ; and as her constant absence gave strong proof of her want of affection, so did it increase my suspicions.

“ I will leave you to judge,” continued Somers, “ what must have been the feeling of a jealous man, when, passing their house, he saw one officer or young gentleman walk in, or another go out ; knew
his

his wife was there, and durst not be of the party!—Then, at their next meeting, hear his wife bestowing extravagant encomiums on this person or that:—’twas hell itself!

“Tired of the scene, and not daring to alter it, I submitted to her remaining there, while, for the relief of my mind, I went into the country. But still, such was the force of my attachment, I could not exist happy without her, and therefore returned.

“I then proposed for her to live with me again.

“She, in reply, recapitulated all the poisonous doctrines laid down by the Sternholds; stated, that it was not in my power to afford her those comforts she met with at her father’s; and, finally, declared, if I offered to remove her, she
• would

would prevail upon her father to put the warrant of attorney in force against me.

“ Staggered by this declaration, which at once unfolded to me her want of affection, I knew not what to do ; but lingered near the house in which all my hope of happiness was centered, and submitted to seeing her occasionally.

“ Time gave me opportunity for reflection.

“ I was miserable ; but began to investigate the cause from whence this misery originated, and found that it had its origin in my affection for her.

“ The only step then left me to pursue was, to extract this fatal passion from my heart. Then would her inveterate parents no longer have the power to punish me by torturing my feelings ; as all the desire I ever could have had to enter their
house

house was on account of Louisa, whose visits I was not able to prevent.

“ If I could once forget her, that desire would of course cease, as likewise would my jealousy and anxiety on her account : therefore, like the wretch who, driven to despair, plunges a dagger into his heart, so did I forcibly tear myself away, and put it out of my power to receive her occasional visits, by quitting London.

“ Fortune, as if tired of persecuting me, now partly relented.

“ I once more came into the possession of a handsome fortune through the bequest of a friend, and immediately fled to this spot, with the hope of conquering an attachment that has been of fourteen years’ duration.”

CHAP. II.

“**W**HAT occasion,” said Sir Charles, “is there to conquer your attachment, now you have the power of rescuing your wife from her situation, and obliging her to live with you?”

“There,” resumed Somers, “I considered you would blame me; but I will state my reasons for not adopting such a plan.

“I love Louisa with far too great sincerity ever to see her more. This expression, which may appear strange, and seems to carry a contradiction with it, is no more strange than true.

“It was not her person, but her affections I courted, and wished to keep.

“It

“ It was from that source I expected to derive happiness.

“ Can I ever forget that she neglected me, insulted me, and forsook me in adversity? And, if I cannot, is it possible I can ever esteem her, or receive that happiness in her society that I otherwise should?”

“ I concluded,” rejoined Sir Charles, “ that your nature had been more forgiving. Is it possible that you, who can pardon a stranger, and follow that forgiveness with pity and assistance, yet refuse to overlook the misconduct of her who is, and ought to be, dearer to you than all the world?”

“ Heaven knows,” replied Somers, “ I cannot harbour resentment against her; and from my heart I pardon every impropriety of conduct in her; but still the
compa-

comparifon you bring is not a good one : I can forgive and affift a ftranger, even although he fhould have attempted to take my life ; yet I could not take him to my heart, love him, and give to him my unbounded efteem. Neither can I do thus by Louifa ; although I fhall readily admit there are fome circumftances that plead in palliation of her offence ; but nothing can obliterate it. The principal reafon is, that fhe was taught by her parents to defpife me ; this naturally compels me to investigate their conduct.

“ Whatever might have been my purfuits before I married, yet that act, having made her mine, ought to have filenced their tongues refpecting me.

“ There is no engagement on earth fo facred as that which exifts between a man and his wife.

“ I am

“ I am of opinion, that the man who by base insinuations robs me of the affections of a virtuous partner, is worse than he who robs me on the highway, or plunders my house of all I am worth ; who, dictated by malice, plunges a dagger into my heart ; or who debauches the person of my wife.

“ He who robs me on the highway, or plunders my house of all I am worth, only takes my bread ; a loss that is lightly borne when I have a tender partner to share it with me, and to comfort me under my misfortune.

“ The means of living are always open, and a thousand opportunities offer by which I can recruit my purse ; but who can regain the lost affections of a wife ? and, if they could, how can I ever forget that they were lost, and the treat-

ment I was necessitated to meet with during that period?

“ He that plunges a dagger in my heart, performs an act of kindness, compared with the other, by ridding me in a moment of that existence which becomes a torture under the circumstances in which I labour.

“ And he that debauches the person of my wife, renders her loathsome to me, and thereby enables me to bear her loss with greater fortitude.

“ If, therefore, it is a crime to estrange the affections of a wife, how much greater must that crime be, when exercised by parents whose duty it is to inculcate affection? And how much greater still must it be, when they take advantage of the husband's misfortunes to put such a design in practice?

“ If

“ If I saw a poor wretch struck to the ground with sorrow, would it not be doubly cruel in me to deprive him of the only comfort he had left ?

“ Such a conduct is repugnant to human nature.

“ There is so great a degree of wanton cruelty in it, that I know not how it is possible any person could adopt it.

“ It is a coward’s blow, and wondrously disgraces the author.

“ If I entrust my wife in the company of her parents, am I, in return, to conclude that they, for the felicity I allot them by the pleasure of her society, will take advantage of my absence to rob me of all hope of happiness in this world ? I will draw a comparison ; if I were to lend you a property that was absolutely mine, and what I esteemed more

than my life, would it not be infamous in you, because you had a fancy for it, to deprive me of its possession?

“ I remember well, when I stood indebted to Sternhold, a debt for which I was accountable to misfortune only, he, to blacken my character, declared I had robbed him of the sum he lent me.

“ It was a base insinuation; but what has he robbed me of? more than my life! since thus my time must wear away in inconceivable torture, till grief, too mighty to be borne, shall burst my heart-strings, and restore my soul to its Creator.

“ When I have thought concerning the cruelty of their conduct, I have been apt to arraign the justice of Heaven.

“ They who can bend their knee in methodistic ardour, and pray that God would forgive them their trespasses as
they

they forgive those who trespass against them; or, as an elegant author expresses it,

‘ That mercy I to others shew,

‘ That mercy shew to me ;’

and thus with solemn farce mock the Deity; I have wondered that his Providence has not perplexed them in their fortune, disgraced them in their family, and afflicted them in their persons; for how can they expect happiness themselves, who deal out misery so wantonly to others?

“ Look yonder,” continued Somers, (pointing to the portraits); “ there behold the woman that I loved.—Almighty God!—how much—what would I not give—to what degree of beggary would I not submit to be reduced, if she could

be returned to my arms with the affection she once possessed; but which they, through an inveteracy that would disgrace a savage, have deprived me of!

“There too behold my child!—Afflicting, maddening idea!—that child must be brought up to despise its father!”

“Here are Sternhold’s letters to his daughter; read how he warns her against crediting the affections of her husband; see how he guards her against my hypocrisy, my artful wiles!—Now cast your eyes on me, reduced through grief to a skeleton; my eyes sunk in my head, and excruciating sorrow preying upon my existence; then judge of my art and my hypocrisy!”

“Mr. Somers,” rejoined Sir Charles, “you suffer the recollection of these events

events to wound you too deeply ; you have been unfortunate, and they have taken advantage of it."

" I have certainly been unfortunate," resumed Somers ; " but I am not of opinion there is such a deity as Fortune, standing blindfold on a wheel ; or that the world is governed by chance. He who causes fortune is our Creator : is it therefore because Providence visits us with misfortune, that others should take advantage of it by adding to it ?

" It was their duty, as human beings, independent of relationship, to have softened the hours of sorrow, and not to have aggravated them.

" If they thought I lacked of virtue, then I needed their advice the more, and their doors should have been open to me,

that I might have profited by precept and example.

“ If, on the other hand, they thought me virtuous, and that all their treatment, however cruel, could not drive me into error, then was their conduct wrong in taking advantage of my virtue, for the practice of their own vice.

‘ But they are touched with methodism, and buoy themselves up with the enthusiastic hope that all is right; that they are the elect of God, and that his Spirit has taken possession of their hearts: as if it were possible that the pure Spirit of God could take up its residence where foul inveteracy dwells; or could dictate to them a conduct that would disgrace a fiend.

“ He that locks up another in an iron
cage,

cage, and leaves him to starve for the want of food, is merciful when compared with him who lives in the act of perpetual murder, by constantly wringing the heart and torturing the feelings of of his devoted victim, till he gluts his eyes by beholding him sinking into his grave.

“ A parent has a right to advise his child ; but not to hate, despise, and abandon her husband. Here the laws of God intervene, and denounce eternal curses on those who attempt it, without exception : and if they plead, in palliation of their crime, that they considered me worthy of such treatment, what shall I then think of a worm of earth, puffed up with monstrous pride, thus venturing to lend his puny assistance to his Creator ; as if he were incapable of punishing, or of se-

parating those whom he has strictly forbid man to separate?

“ But what will not pride dictate to mortals, since it is universally allowed it owes its origin to ignorance?”

“ Mr. Somers,” said Sir Charles, “ however the mind of your wife may be debauched, or however her affections may have been estranged from you, still this does not attach to your child; she knows not that her mother has broken her marriage vow by forsaking you. I should presume you ought to fend for her. Her company will enliven your spirits, and make you better able to bear your lot.”

“ Worse, worse!” exclaimed Somers: “ can I view the child, and not think of its mother?—impossible! And so much do I abhor the detestable vice they have been guilty of, that I could not perform

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an action wherein a trait of their conduct appeared.

“ Would you have me drag the infant from its mother, as they have torn it from its father?—or would you have me pursue a plan that would force Louisa to this place?—No.—If a sense of the duty she owes to God and to her husband—if the recollection of her sacred oath at the altar, by which she vowed eternal truth and constancy—but, more than all, if affection will not bring her hither, I never desire her company; nor will I obtain it by other means.”

“ You are the best judge of your own feelings,” rejoined Sir Charles, “ and must act accordingly.”

“ Sternholds have much to answer for. God forbid there should be many such characters in existence: if there were,

all



all confidence between a man and his wife must be done away, and the order of nature totally reversed."

"And yet," resumed Somers, "nine out of ten applaud their conduct: there are few fathers, say they, who act as Mr. Sternhold; although his daughter married without his consent, yet, when the man could not support her equal to his expectations, he took her back again with her child.

"Thus argue those who do not examine the merits of the case.

"The fact is, Sternhold, taking advantage of my misfortunes, in addition to improper advice, held out his house as a lure to draw her from me, where she could live in a style superior to what I could then procure her.

"If he considered I had not the means
of

of providing for her equal to his wishes, then should he have requested my company with her; for the interest of married people cannot be separated.

“ In reply to this he argues, that a man has an undoubted right to do what he pleases with his fortune.

“ I assert the contrary. Providence never blessed an individual with superabundance to afford him the means of separating a man from his wife.

“ As well might I make use of my fortune in drawing a wife from her duty, and hire a man to assassinate her husband. Here follows the comparison: my Louisa is as completely estranged from me as if she had embraced a vicious course, and I am dying daily.

“ Neither was the conduct of Sternhold the result of a grounded affection for
his

his daughter ; that affection was not equal to his inveteracy against me. If it were, he would have given it up for the purpose of rendering his child happy ; unless it be allowed, that a wife can be satisfied in seeing her husband treated with contempt."

" I see how it is," rejoined Sir Charles ; " their conduct towards their daughter was merely self-love ; her society yielded them happiness. The same as I might take a fancy to a favourite bird, which I deprived of liberty for my own gratification. If their affection had been real, they would have studied her peace of mind ; but they, preferring their malice to every other consideration, have made their regard a pretext to carry their execrable designs into execution ; well knowing they could not wound you more sensibly

sibly than by depriving you of her. But yet, Somers, there may be some palliation: you, perhaps, have been extravagant and profligate; or have been given to drinking or gaming."

"No, no!" resumed Somers; "I was frugal to the confiscation of a shilling.

"Drunkenness I abhor; and as to gaming, I never ventured a guinea of my own property, or that of another's, in the exercise of it. My bitterest enemy cannot accuse me of practising either of them."

"I have heard your recital," rejoined Sir Charles, "with horror: you have been infamously abused, and treated with a degree of cruelty that reflects disgrace upon the authors. The day of retribution will come, when this must be retorted on themselves. In the mean time, let me advise you to destroy those portraits, burn
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the letters that keep alive the recollection of these events ; determine to be happy, and dedicate this temple to mirth, instead of solitude."

" Ah ! Sir Charles !" replied Somers, " it is easier to dictate than to put in practice. An attachment of so many years' duration, so firmly rooted as mine, is not speedily, if ever, to be eradicated."

" Try then another experiment," resumed Sir Charles. " Since they estimate a man according to the fortune he possesses, yours is now different to what it was ; they will no longer perpetuate their resentment, since you have the means of existence so amply in your power. Visit them, endeavour to convince them of their error, and conciliate their esteem. Louisa, who has placed too implicit a confidence in all they have advanced, will then

then be compelled to think and act differently ; and when her parents see the error of their conduct, she will also see the error of hers ; and happiness by this means may be once more restored to you. You are not of a disposition to refuse a repentant wife, who supplicates forgiveness for the past."

" You have truly portrayed my disposition," resumed Somers : " in fact, I would rather be the party that should ask forgiveness, than witness the humility of the suppliant while he asked it : but I can never visit them with any prospect of success.

" They have asserted and maintained the grossest falsehoods respecting me ; and I, in return, have asserted what they, for the support of false pride, have contradicted. If they were to consent to my
 , visits,

visits, all parties would be present, circumstances would be brought to light, which sooner than they could submit to, they will carry their inveterate hatred to the grave."

"Why, then," rejoined Sir Charles, "there is no redress to be expected from them.

"I have frequently met with those characters, who, having sprung from nothing, feel their advancement in life the more forcibly. They recollect the scenes of humility they have passed through, and think they have an undoubted right to exercise a haughtiness of carriage to every one they are acquainted with; thus rendering themselves contemptible in the eyes of their superiors, and despised by those who, from interested motives, court their favour.

"If,

“ If, therefore, any redress is to be obtained, it must be your own act. Permit me to say, that, as a man and a christian, your conduct is wrong.

“ You have maintained, and very justly, that for the husband a wife shall leave her father and mother, and cleave to him alone, but you seem to forget this equally attaches to you.

“ You are now by nature appointed her guardian and protector, and have, through fortuitous circumstances, permitted her to remain with those who had poisoned her mind and lessened her affections.

“ You should remember that you did not marry an angel, but a mortal, and large allowances should be made when you consider it was the voice of a parent she listened to.

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“ It is now your duty to take her from those who have thus contaminated her principles, and place her with yourself, where, by tenderness and affection exercised on your part, she may regain that affection which she has lost.

“ What am I to think of a man whose goodness of heart prompts him to interest himself in the welfare of every individual, by convincing them of their error, and yet refuses to perform this to the woman whom God and nature has entrusted to his care; but prefers rather to leave her with those who injure her principles, and lead her astray from the paths of duty?

“ Believe me, however she may have erred heretofore, it is you that will be accountable hereafter, for her persevering in this conduct.”

Somers

Somers appeared thoughtful ; he had never before viewed it in this light, but every word of Sir Charles's carried conviction to his senses. After a considerable pause, he at length requested Sir Charles would state what was the most eligible plan for him to pursue.

“ Have you,” said Sir Charles, “ any idea that she has descended to the one vice a husband cannot overlook ?”

“ No, really,” replied Somers; “ whatever my jealousy might once have taught me to suspect, yet in my more cool moments, I feel inclined perfectly to acquit her of so abominable a practice.”

“ Then,” resumed Sir Charles, “ take your pen, and write an order for me to bring her ; she is your property, and I will have her and the child, or fetch away the house with me.”

“ I will

“ I will seriously consider of your advice,” returned Somers, “ and shall most probably put it in practice ; yet in an affair of this nature, which so materially concerns my future happiness, permit me a few days to determine on it.”

“ Granted,” replied Sir Charles ; “ but if you then should waver in your resolution, I positively will go without your written order, declare I have a verbal one, and insist on her accompanying me. You shall not thus become a prey to sorrow, while it lays in your own power to alleviate it. It must be allowed you are wonderfully kind, in sacrificing your peace of mind, and perhaps shortening your life, in order to render happy the bitterest enemies both you and Mrs. Somers have in existence—the Sternholds.”

“ I see it,” rejoined Somers, “ and am
sincerely

sincerely thankful to you for this morning's visit.

"Be assured, as soon as I have got my house in readiness for her reception, I will put your plan in practice."

"That is well said," exclaimed Sir Charles, starting up and taking hold of his hand; "now leave this spot, this temple of solitude, and let us adjourn where we may discourse on other subjects."

Somers obeyed; and Sir Charles, locking the door, took possession of the key, at the same time observing he should not put it in his power to relapse by perusing a parcel of trumpery letters.

"I shall," continued he, "give this key to Mrs. Somers."

"I sub-

“ I submit,” replied Somers, smiling, and left the place with a countenance far different to what he hitherto had done.

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

THEY now repaired to the house, where Sir Charles acquainted him with his intention of bestowing Augusta on Sir Thomas; which intention, he added, he should put in practice as early as possible, since he feared she had fixed her attachment on Theodore.

Somers said all he could, in return, to dissuade him from such an attempt; laid down Sir Thomas as an improper character, and unworthy of being allied to so amiable a girl as Augusta: while, on the other hand, he portrayed Theodore as a mirror of perfection; combated with force all the arguments that had been used

against him, and strongly insisted, from his observation and some hints which had been dropped by the messenger from London, as likewise by Theodore, that he could prove himself upon an equality with his daughter. This produced a long argument between Somers and Sir Charles, which I shall leave them to decide, while I attend to Augusta.

She left her father's, attended by her servant Ellen, on the preceding morning, and travelled post till she reached a small town, called Maidenhead, about twenty-six miles from London, on the Bath road.

At this place Augusta intended sleeping, not thinking it safe to pursue her journey further that day, as the evening would approach before she could reach town.

They

They alighted at an inn, and were conducted to a spacious room.

Augusta objected to its size, the afternoon being rather cold ; she requested to be put in a small room, and to have a fire.

The servant replied, that she would get such an apartment ready for her.

Ellen followed the servant, that she might have an opportunity of viewing it.

The servant informed her there was a room would exactly suit the lady, but which was at present occupied by some persons who had arrived in a returned chaise, and that she would request them to accept of another apartment.

Ellen therefore waited in the passage while the servant went into the room for that purpose.

The request was complied with, and the party left the room.

No sooner did Ellen perceive them, than she ran to Augusta in great agitation.

“ My dear madam,” said she, “ compose yourself; I am sure what I have to tell you will require all your fortitude.”

“ Good Heaven!” cried Augusta, “ what has happened? or what have you to relate?—Do not keep me in suspense, but let me know this instant.”

“ I have seen Mr. Theodore,” replied Ellen; “ he is now in the house.”

“ You surprise me,” returned Augusta, while her face vied with the damask rose: “ how unhappy have I made myself through my idle fears for his safety!

“ Do you think he saw us arrive?” continued she. “ I am in so much agitation,

tation, I know not what to do!—I must see him ; but perhaps he will leave the house without giving me an opportunity of speaking with him.”

“ That I am confident he would do,” rejoined Ellen, “ if he knew you were here. He would be ashamed to look you in the face. Believe me, madam, Theodore is a villain !”

“ A villain !” cried Augusta. “ Are you aware how you wound my feelings, by coupling the name of villain and Theodore together ? You have heard the malicious reports raised against him by Sir Thomas concerning Clarissa ; but I thought I assured you there was no foundation for it. Theodore is far too worthy to be guilty of such a practice ; and Clarissa, I am confident, would scorn it.”

“ My dear madam,” replied Ellen,

“ you must not be offended with me ;— he is certainly a villain : and as to Clarissa, she is no better than she should be. They are both together in the house :—I this minute beheld them, and the servant informed me they came here together in a returned chaise.”

Now did the colour forsake the face of Augusta ; she had power only to exclaim, “ Is it possible !” and sunk upon a chair.

“ Do, madam,” cried Ellen, “ endeavour to support yourself. Consider, if those infamous wretches were to see you, how they would triumph in your weakness.”

“ Yes, Ellen,” rejoined Augusta, “ I will support myself ; they shall not witness my folly. Could I have thought that Theodore was so base !—he that appeared all goodness !—How has he deceived me !”

Here

Here Augusta, who could no longer sustain her feelings, burst into tears.

“ My dear lady,” resumed Ellen, “ is this supporting yourself? Do call resentment to your aid, and leave the house this instant. Let me order a chaise, and we will go to London to-night.”

“ I will take your advice,” said Augusta; “ but first order pen, ink, and paper, to be brought.”

Ellen obeyed, and the servant attended with it.

Augusta walked to the window to hide her tears, while Ellen, who wished to satisfy a natural curiosity, began a conversation with the servant.

“ That was a handsome young couple,” said she, “ who left the room to accommodate my mistress; I declare it was ra-

the rude to disturb them. Pray, have they been long here?"

"Not long," replied the servant; "about half an hour, I believe."

"They look like a young married couple," resumed Ellen: "have they ordered separate beds?"

"They have not ordered any," replied the maid: "but I rather think," continued she, "they have not been long married, as the gentleman pays her great attention."

Augusta heaved a heavy sigh.

"Yes, yes," rejoined Ellen, "that is generally the case at first; their honeymoon, I suppose, is not of many days' duration."

"I should rather suppose it is a stolen match," resumed the maid, "as the couple

couple do not appear to be in very high spirits."

Ellen asked no farther questions, and therefore the maid left the room.

Augusta, as soon as she was gone, sat down and wrote a few words, which she folded up and wafered; then ringing for the servant, informed her that she had changed her mind, and should go on to London; therefore desired a chaise and four might be instantly got ready, as she wished to reach town before it grew too late."

The order was obeyed; and as she was getting into the chaise, she desired the lads would drive with all possible speed, and she would reward them, as she was fearful of travelling in the dark. Then, turning to the maid who attended her to the chaise, she gave her half-a-crown, and

desired she would deliver the letter to the young lady who left the room for her accommodation.

No sooner was the chaise gone from the door, than the maid hastened to obey the order.

Clarissa received the letter in the presence of Theodore. “ Good Heaven !” said she, “ to Clarissa Lesley !—Who could possibly know where to find me ?” Then hastily unfolding it, she read as follows :

‘ MADAM,

‘ IF any arguments of mine could stop
 ‘ you in the career of vice, I should think
 ‘ my time not thrown away in making
 ‘ use of them ; but perhaps when I in-
 ‘ form you that the wickedness of your
 ‘ conduct has broken the heart, and put
 ‘ an

‘ an end to the existence of your once
 ‘ valued friend, Mrs. Bentley, it may
 ‘ have a greater effect upon you than all
 ‘ I can advance. If this should be the case,
 ‘ leave that specious villain Theodore, and
 ‘ learn to despise him, as does

‘ AUGUSTA FREEMAN.’

Clarissa stood lost in thought, after having read the letter, and for a few moments her faculties were suspended.

Theodore beheld the visible alteration in her countenance, and hastily enquired if the letter contained any disagreeable intelligence.

Clarissa was unable to reply, but sunk down on a chair; yet had sufficient presence of mind to hold the letter out to Theodore.

No sooner had he read it than he rung the bell, and demanded who had left it.

The maid acquainted him with the particulars.

He desired a horse might immediately be got ready, declaring he would follow the chaise; but when he turned to speak with Clarissa, he found it would be impossible to leave her, she had fainted.

Every assistance was procured, and they shortly restored her to her senses, yet nothing could restore that peace of mind the letter had destroyed.

“Cruel epistle! barbarous misconception!” exclaimed Theodore; “did it follow, because we were seen in each other’s company, that I should have seduced you, and you, lost to all sense of virtue, should have submitted to it? what part of my
conduct

conduct has given rise to this suspicion?"

"Talk not of suspicion," cried Clarissa, "that can be done away by an explanation; but what can restore my lost friend? she who was more than a parent to me; she who took delight in inculcating every virtuous principle; what must have been her sufferings if she considered this step was with my consent? but 'tis plain what she suffered, since her death has been the consequence. Ah, my God! what has not that man to answer for who occasioned this?"

Theodore endeavoured to support her spirits, and advised her to bear her lot with fortitude and resignation.

While he was engaged in this conversation, Freeman's servant who had been
ordered

ordered to follow Sir Thomas, and who had arrived at the inn scarce a minute before, passed the door of the apartment, which accidentally was left open, and discovering Theodore, entered.

He expressed his pleasure on seeing him, alleging, that it was feared some accident had happened to him.

“How happy,” said he, “will Mr. Somers be, to hear you are safe! and the news will be highly acceptable to my master.” Then turning to a servant who had followed him, “Order me a horse directly,” said he; “I have not a moment to spare.”

Theodore stood surveying him, and endeavouring to recollect where he had seen him; at length he remembered him at Sir Charles Freeman's, but wishing to be

be satisfied, " You have the advantage of me," said he.

" I am servant to Mr. Freeman," replied the man.

Clarissa hearing the name of Freeman mentioned, turned round hastily, and the man immediately recollecting her, " Bless me !" said he, " Miss Lesley ; how fortunate am I to meet with you ! my master is distracted on your account ; he has sent me in pursuit of you."

Clarissa screamed with terror.

Theodore started forwards, and laying hold of the man by his collar, drove him towards the door ; " Get out of the room," cried he ; " tell your master he is a villain, that Miss Lesley is now under my protection, and that I will forfeit my life before I'll resign her."

The

The man appeared stupified, but instantly obeyed; he knew not at first how to account for this singular conduct, till recalling to his mind the suspicion that had been raised concerning Theodore having eloped with Clarissa, he concluded it was the fact, and therefore made all possible haste to London, for the purpose of acquainting his master.

When the man was gone, Clarissa pointed out the necessity there was for her immediately quitting the house, lest Freeman should be informed by the man, and come in pursuit of her.

Theodore felt the force of this argument, and therefore ordering a chaise, set off for London, where they concluded it would be best to remain till some plan was adopted.

Having

Having taken up their residence at the Gloucester coffee-house, they each sat down and wrote a letter to Mr. Somers, acquainting him with what had occurred since they left his protection.

CHAP. IV.

THE circumstance of the different parties meeting at the inn, as likewise the terror of Clarissa lest she should fall into the hands of Mr. Freeman, will appear strange, until the whole is elucidated.

I shall therefore unfold the various transactions, which will throw a light upon the subject.

For this purpose I must recal to the recollection of my reader the circumstance mentioned in the first volume concerning Clarissa being in the possession of Mrs. Gripe, and her rescue from that place by Freeman, in company with Somers and Sir Charles.

Mrs.

Mrs. Gripe was a woman who perfectly understood the iniquitous business in which she was engaged.

She had contemplated the beauty of Clarissa while in her possession as a wolf would a lamb that he intended to devour.

She was compelled by imperious necessity to part from her; but the moment she had left the door, she desired a man servant to follow Sir Charles's carriage, which conveyed her, and bring home intelligence where she resided.

As the carriage did not travel fast, he was able to keep it in sight; saw Clarissa get out, and watched her till she reached the cottage.

He then enquired of a husbandman if she lived there, and was answered in the affirmative.

After

After which he returned with the wished-for intelligence to Mrs. Gripe, and was by her immediately dispatched to Sir Thomas Blandford, who, she knew, was at that time in the country, as he had frequently been to her house since his return.

Sir Thomas no sooner received the message than he waited on Mrs. Gripe, who informed him of the adventure, and gave so luxurious a description of Clarissa, that he was anxious till he should have an opportunity of seeing her; and paid the necessary deposit to Mrs. Gripe in return for the intelligence.

It may appear strange that Sir Thomas should wish to possess Clarissa, after he had so lately obtained possession of Sophia Bridport, who still retained a large share of his affections. But Sophia had become

become altered through illness, and Clarissa was a new object. This alone is always a sufficient incitement to men of libertine principles. His desires were likewise inflamed from the description he had received.

These desires were neither controlled nor checked by reason.

He had come to the possession of a large fortune, and considered it of no further use than as it afforded him the means of adding to his pleasures. Clarissa was likewise poor; he was able to settle an annuity on her, and then he conceived there would be no harm done.

The consequence of this determination was, that he visited the cottage on the following morning, where he met with Freeman and Somers, as before related.

When

When he beheld Clarissa, he considered that Mrs. Gripe's description fell far short of the original. He had not expected to find so many elegant accomplishments, combined with beauty, in a cottage.

Yet, beautiful and accomplished as she was, she did not inspire him with a sentiment of pure affection ; a strong desire to possess her was all he felt.

He looked forward to the time when he should have her within his power with a degree of ecstasy, and resolved that no obstacle should prevent him from putting his designs in practice.

Firm in this intent, he sent for two men who he knew would undertake any thing, however infamous, with the hope of gain.

The

The most difficult point for him to determine was, to what place he should remove her.

He had promised Mrs. Gripe to convey Clarissa to her house ; but when he recollected it was from that place she was rescued, and when he heard the high encomiums bestowed on her at Sir Charles's, he concluded they would attempt to regain her, and, naturally suspecting Mrs. Gripe, would again search her house ; this made him alter his intention.

He feared sending her to the place where Sophia Bridport was confined, lest such an act should give her a more contemptible opinion of him than she already had.

But when he again considered that Sophia was ill, and that he could send an order to keep them totally separate and
ignorant

ignorant of each other's situation, he gave this plan the preference, and adopted the means accordingly.

The day having arrived on which it was settled to take her from the cottage, a chaise belonging to Sir Thomas was ordered to be ready in a bye-lane near the place; and one of the men, having thrown a carter's frock over his clothes, called at Mrs. Bentley's cottage, and seeing Clarissa, assumed the west-country expression.

"I'll be come," said he, "from muster Zummers: he wants to speak wi' thee for your or vive minutes about somewhat particular."

Clarissa obeyed the summons, and having put on her cloak and bonnet accompanied the man.

When they arrived at the spot where
it

It was necessary to turn, for the purpose of reaching the ferry: "Thig way," said the man; "muster Zummers is hard by, wi' a muster Morris."

Sir Thomas had heard of the affair respecting Morris, and therefore had ordered the men to make use of his name, if occasion should require.

"Bless me!" said Clarissa, "why did not Mr. Morris come to the cottage?"

"Thee must ask un," replied the man. "Ife was only told to bring thee to un; zoo come along."

Clarissa, not having the least suspicion, obeyed.

They presently arrived at the place where stood the chaise.

"Come," said the man, "get thee in. Muster Zummers asked thig good man to come wi' his chaise vor thee,

that thee might be wi' un the zooner ;
and becaufe as how the lane was dirty."

Clariffa hesitated.

" Come, get thee in," repeated the man ; " there is good news a-brewing vor thee ; thou wilt be pleafed when thee comeft to hear it."

Clariffa coupled this intelligence with the receipt of the fifty-pound note, and thinking it really was the cafe, fubmitted.

The other man then mounting the horfe, drove with uncommon velocity ; ftruck through Keynſham, croſſed the bridge, and took into a private road.

Clariffa becoming extremely anxious, required he would immediately inform her where he was going, or that ſhe would open the door and get out.

" Make thyſelf eaſy," replied the man,
" and

“ and I’se wull tell thee all about un. Thee seeft as how mufter Morris was coming to thee wi’ some good news, but met wi’ a mizvortune on the road, and is at a house hard by wi’ mufter Zummers, zo don’t be alarmed.”

In a few minutes they crossed a common, and arrived at a lonely cottage.

The man got off his horse, and opening the door, desired Clariffa to walk in.

Clariffa, although oppreffed by a thoufand fears, was neceffitated to comply.

Having reached the interior of the cottage, fhe was conducted to a room.

“ There,” faid the man, handing her a chair and affuming his own dialect, “ fit down.”

“ Where is Mr. Somers?” exclaimed Clariffa; “ let me fee him this instant.”

The man laughed. "I can see by your face," said he, "that you will shortly be married. There is a gentleman who is in love with you, and will have you whether you approve or not."

Clarissa now saw her situation, and exclaimed, "Is it possible Mr. Freeman can have used me thus?"

The men had been strictly forbid mentioning the name of Sir Thomas, and had likewise received a hint of Freeman's partiality to her; and Sir Thomas, suspecting he would endeavour to recover her, desired them to avoid him if he fell in their way; when, therefore, Clarissa mentioned the name of Freeman, the men thought they could not do better than by laying it to his charge.

"Mr. Freeman," said the man, "means
to

to act honourably by you ; but I suppose you have refused to take him, or he suspects as much."

" Could I have thought," said Clarissa, " that my refusal, dictated by such disinterested principles, would have prompted him to act thus cruelly by me !—What will become of Mrs. Bentley !—she will run distracted !"

" No, no ;" replied the man, " Mr. Freeman has by this time acquainted her with the whole particulars, and promised to convey you back as soon as you are married ; therefore make your mind easy, and be assured he would not have taken this step, if he could have been happy without you."

Clarissa remembered she had a fifty-pound note in her possession, and offered to bribe the men if they would conduct

her back. But it so happened that Sir Thomas had promised thirty pounds to each of them, exclusive of their expences; as such, they made a merit of refusing Clarissa's proposal.

The men now quitted the room, and locking the door, left her to contemplate on her situation.

She called to her mind the respectful attention Freeman had paid her, and concluded he could have no dishonourable motives.

What confirmed her the more in this opinion, was his conduct when he first beheld her in the possession of Mrs. Gripe. If his intentions had been improper, he had then an opportunity of putting them in practice; instead of which, he rescued and restored her to Mrs. Bentley.

These events contributed greatly to
lessen

been guilty of, and partly blamed herself for having refused him when he made so honourable and disinterested an offer, which refusal had driven him to this step.

The evening having approached, the men made their appearance, and informed her they were ordered by Mr. Freeman to conduct her to London, where she would meet him ready with a licence; and that they had only stopt at the cottage till it was dark, fearing lest she should make any resistance, or call upon the passers-by to rescue her.

They further informed her, if she would submit to the journey without making any attempt of that nature, they would permit her to travel at her ease, and not use any precautions which might be offensive to her if put in practice.

Clarissa,

Clarissa, who had argued herself into a belief that Freeman did not mean to conduct himself otherwise than honourably by her, thinking likewise that all resistance would be useless, unless a favourable opportunity should offer, and probably might subject her to insult from the men, promised to remain quiet.

The chaise was now produced, the blinds of which were drawn up and fastened. She was immediately conducted in, followed by the same man as had accompanied her before.

The chaise proceeded with velocity, and never stopt, except for a few minutes, while the man who rode watered the horses at a pond, and gave them some hay.

These horses proceeded forty miles, and then arriving at a small public-house, were

relieved by others, which had previously been left in readiness.

The cattle, being high fed, performed the residue of the journey, and arrived before the dawn of day at the appointed spot, about two miles on the London side of Reading.

Clarissa had flattered herself she should reach London during the day, where she concluded an opportunity would offer itself of calling for assistance; but having reached the destined place, and being informed her journey was at an end, she felt extremely disappointed.

The man dismounted from his horse, and entered the house to instruct the servants relative to the imposition they had practised, by making use of Freeman's name, and to desire they would conduct themselves accordingly.

Having

Having seen that an apartment was ready for her, the man returned to the chaise and requested her to alight.

Clarissa looked around, but could discover nothing except fields and trees, the house standing in a lonely situation.

He then introduced her to a room, in which was a fire and a small bed, and informed her they expected Mr. Freeman before the expiration of the day.

An elderly woman, who from her appearance seemed once to have been of Mrs. Gripe's profession, entered the room, and requested if she would take any refreshment before she retired to rest.

Clarissa was too much agitated, and anxious for her future safety, to accept of any; she therefore replied in the negative, and desired she might be left to her repose.

The woman obeyed, and Clarissa heard her lock the door, and take out the key.

She now examined her apartment, and going to the window, observed it was secured with iron bars; but this did not excite surprise, as the apartment was on the ground floor, it being usual, more particularly in a lone situation, to place iron bars on the lower windows of the house for protection.

She sat down on the bed, and exhausted her imagination in ruminating on the consequence of this adventure, till, wearied with thought, she sunk upon her pillow, thinking to obtain an hour's respite in the arms of sleep; dreams more dreadful than her waking thoughts troubled her mind, and prevented her repose.

She awoke and rung the bell, the woman attended; Clarissa asked her a variety

riety of questions ; but all the answer she could obtain was, that the house belonged to Mr. Freeman, and that he was hourly expected.

Clarissa accepted of some trifling refreshment, and endeavoured to bear her confinement with fortitude, yet did the hours pass on heavily, and night approached without hearing any thing of Mr. Freeman.

On the afternoon of the following day she was amused with a plaintive song in a female voice, and while she was listening to it with the utmost attention, she heard a confused noise of voices apparently as if some men were quarrelling.

This noise continued to approach her, and in a moment the door of her apartment was burst open.

Clarissa

Clarissa was terrified, and ran behind the bed for safety, while a man followed her whose countenance seemed filled with anxiety and desperation.

He viewed her for a moment, and then prepared to leave the room with the same haste on which he entered it, but was prevented by a servant of the house who attempted to lay hold of his collar.

The stranger had an oak stick in his hand, with which he levelled a blow at the servant that stunned him, and instantly pursued his course.

Clarissa observing the man laying in the passage and the door open, thought it a favourable opportunity, by taking advantage of the confusion that reigned in the house, to effect her escape; therefore, catching hold of her bonnet and cloak, she
ran.

ran till she reached the outward gate, and unbolting it found herself beside a lane, and a wood at a small distance, to this wood she fled, fearing lest she should be missed and pursued. Having reached it, at the distance of half a mile she discovered the main road, which she knew by the stages and post-chaises that were passing and repassing.

Thither she concluded it would be safest to fly, as she might meet with some conveyance that would transport her out of their reach.

With this intent she ran, and in a few minutes reached it; a returned chaise that moment was coming up; the lad called to her, and she accepted a place; but nothing could equal her surprise on discovering Theodore seated in it.

As

As soon as the first salutations were over, and she began to reassume her courage in consequence of having met with a protector, she acquainted him with the whole of her adventure.

Theodore testified his astonishment at the supposed conduct of Freeman; requested she would make herself perfectly easy, for that he would protect her with his life, in case of a pursuit.

The lad, after he had driven about half the way from Reading to Maidenhead, stopped at a small inn to water his horses and enjoy his pint of ale.

They alighted, and were shewn into a small parlour, where they ordered tea.

Clarissa requested he would explain to her the cause that had induced him to quit the protection of Mr. Somers.

“ It

e “It may be comprised in a few words,”
 replied Theodore; and then related as
 follows:

e “Compelled by the severity and cool
 treatment of Augusta to quit the cottage,
 I hastened to the hill for the purpose of
 returning to Cliffdown-lodge, yet stopt
 when I arrived at the summit to indulge
 my feelings, by once more beholding her,
 but she had quitted the garden.

“I then sat down to ruminate on
 what had passed, and endeavoured to dry
 up a tear lest it should be discovered
 by the ferryman.

“While I sat lost in thoughts of a me-
 lancholy nature, I beheld a boat passing
 up the river with a person in it that I was
 confident I had seen before.

“I drew out a small glass from my
 pocket,

pocket, by the help of which I plainly discerned the features of a man who I remembered to have seen at my uncle's, and who I knew was in his confidence.

“ Greatly alarmed for my own safety, I started up and ran a few steps, but being willing to satisfy myself still further, I again stopt till the boat came opposite to the hill, where I had a nearer view of him.

“ Having perfectly assured myself concerning the truth of my suspicions, I concluded it would be highly improper to return, and therefore hastened over the hill that led to the main road.

“ A stage-coach coming up shortly after, I took a seat in it, and presently reached Bath. Here I devoted an hour to study on what plan was best to pursue.

“ I had

“ I had an inclination to write to Mr. Somers, acquainting him with my reasons for quitting his house ; but when I reflected that he possibly might have been the person who wrote to my uncle, and informed him of my residence, I determined to postpone writing till I should be at a greater distance.

“ I hope,” continued Theodore, “ you do not imagine my suspicions of Mr. Somers lowered him in my estimation ; I assure you it was far from being the case ; I knew that he would not have acted on that principle unless prompted by the best of motives.

“ After wearying myself with thinking of a thousand plans, I at length resolved on visiting London, concluding I should be more secure in the metropolis than



than in the country ; and not having a quantity of cash about me, I was obliged to travel at as cheap a rate as possible, sometimes on the outside of a stage-coach, and sometimes by a returned chaise, in which situation you found me."

Clarissa congratulated him on his escape, and made use of many arguments to remove his suspicions from Somers, alleging, that his relations in London must have gained their intelligence from some other source. Theodore, having called to his recollection the conduct of Sir Charles, turned his suspicion on him.

After they had finished their tea, the lad informed them he was waiting ; they immediately returned to the chaise, and shortly reached Maidenhead, where they were discovered by Ellen, and afterwards

wards by Freeman's servant, as before related.

Having conducted Augusta, Theodore, and Clarissa to London, and shewn by what means the two latter were brought together, I shall now return to Cliffdown-lodge.

CHAP. V.

I LEFT Somers and Sir Charles disputing: the former supported the cause of Theodore, and strongly insisted that he was totally innocent respecting the absence of Clarissa; while Sir Charles contended, with some warmth, on the contrary.

During this dispute a servant entered, and laid on the table four letters, directed to Somers.

Sir Charles viewed them: "Here's one," said he, "from Freeman; and another from Augusta! I did not know she had settled a correspondence with you."

Somers was disconcerted on his discovering

vering Augusta's letter, and taking it up, instantly broke the seal.

Nothing could exceed his astonishment when he perused it ; the contents of which were as follow :

‘ SIR,

‘ I HAVE only time, before the post sets off, to acquaint you that Theodore is a villain. I discovered him with Clarissa at an inn on the road ; but took no farther notice than merely to leave a letter for Miss Lesley, acquainting her with Mrs. Bentley's death, and added a few words of advice. I take this early opportunity of acquainting you, lest either party should again attempt, under the mask of virtue, to impose upon your goodness ; and remain

‘ Your sincere friend,

‘ AUGUSTA FREEMAN.’

Somers

Somers had no sooner read the contents than the letter dropt from his hand.

He started up, walked a few paces about the room, and then exclaimed, "Never, after this, will I place implicit confidence in any one."

Sir Charles asked if he might see the letter.

"By all means," replied Somers.

Sir Charles perused it: "Now," cried he, "who is right, you or me?—I hope you will not for the future dispute my penetration.—Here is a couple of young crocodiles!—This is the young man that is an ornament to human nature!"

Sir Charles now felt his triumph; and determining to make Somers feel it, he followed him about the room. "You see, Mr. Somers," continued he, "I was right. Here is an instance of your fore-
fight;

fight ; these are the parties you always defended. Now, Mr. Somers, I hope this will cure you of practising such ill-timed benevolence : it will be a lesson for you in future."

Somers was teased to that degree that he replied, " It is better to judge too favourably than to be too censorious."

" I see you are hurt," returned Sir Charles, " therefore I shall say no more ; only, for the future, do place a little more reliance on my judgment."

" I declare," replied Somers, " so high was my opinion of them both, that if your daughter had not wrote it, I could not have believed it ; and even now it appears to me impossible : but I will see what these other letters contain." Then taking up the letter which came from Theodore, he perused it.

This letter contained the motives that made him quit his house, his meeting with Clarissa, the encounter with Freeman's servant, his opinion of Freeman's conduct; but did not mention any place where Somers was to write to him.

This letter added greatly to the surprise of Somers; he immediately shewed it to Sir Charles, who having read it, "Do not you see the art of this young hypocrite?" said he; "he fears you have some suspicion, and therefore lays the blame on Freeman; but let us hear what my nephew has to say."

Somers opened Freeman's letter; which informed him of his servant having met them together; of Theodore declaring himself ready to protect her with his life; his regret that Clarissa should have acted on such a principle; and contained many
 invectives

invectives against Theodore, who he vowed to punish if he met him ; that he had called at his aunt's, where he was surprised on finding Augusta just arrived, and who gave him the same intelligence as his servant.

Somers delivered this letter likewise to Sir Charles, who having perused it, " Well, sir," said he, " what is your opinion now ?"

" I am afraid," replied Somers, " it is too true." He then took up the last letter, which came from Clarissa, and which informed him of the methods taken to decoy her from the cottage; an account of her journey till she arrived at the house near Reading, which, she said, belonged to Mr. Freeman; her deliverance from there by a stranger breaking open the door; her meeting with Theodore; the letter

which she received from Augusta concerning Mrs. Bentley's death, which she lamented in very pathetic terms; the cruelty of Augusta's suspicion; and concluded by requesting him to write to her, directing the letter to be left at the Gloucester coffee-house, and she would call for it.

This letter also Somers put into his hands.

“ Now, Sir Charles,” said Somers, “ I hope you will allow that both my young friends are innocent.”

“ How can you thus persist in your own opinion?” said Sir Charles; “ is it not perfectly natural that both the culprits should agree in one story? I have not so bad an opinion of Edward, as to suppose he would be guilty of such a transaction.”

“ Neither have I,” rejoined Somers; “ this letter has thrown a sufficient light
upon

upon the business. Clarissa has been deceived: it was Sir Thomas who employed those men to take her, and they have made use of your nephew's name."

Sir Charles laughed at this. "What subterfuges," cried he, "do you resort to, in defence of your first opinion!"

"Have patience," resumed Somers, "and I will explain my reasons." At this juncture he was interrupted by the entrance of a servant, who informed him a Mr. Bridport would be happy to speak with him."

Somers desired he would shew him in.

When the servant was gone, "This is the person," continued Somers, "that was in prison at the suit of Sir Thomas, and who was liberated when you purchased the estate.

The servant returned, and introduced

Bridport supporting his daughter, who was so much reduced, as scarcely to be able to walk.

Bridport started back on seeing Sir Charles; Somers ran towards him, "Sir Charles," said he, "will be happy to see you;" then taking a chair, he seated Sophia in it.

Bridport, who did not know Sir Charles till Somers mentioned his name, thanked him for his enlargement. "Ah, my God!" continued he, "what have I not to thank you for, since it has afforded me an opportunity of rescuing my poor ruined and undone girl, from the power of a villain, a ——"

"Hold," cried Somers, interrupting him, "your daughter is not well, permit me to call my servant," at the same time ringing the bell, and the servant attending,

ing, "Conduct this young lady," said he, "to another apartment, and see if you can prevail on her to take any refreshment." Then following Sophia to the door, desired she would be composed and consider herself at home, for that she was now with her friends.

Sophia thanked him, and retired supported by the maid.

"Mr. Somers," said Bridport, "I thank you for your kindness. I confess I was too unguarded, and did not consider the effect my conversation would have on my poor girl; but you are all goodness."

"Say no more about it," replied Somers; "but let me know how you have proceeded since you left this house, till you recovered your daughter. I have a particular reason for my enquiry, which I will state hereafter."

“ Permit me first to relate,” rejoined Bridport, “ all that my poor child has acquainted me with ; because it is fit you should know her innocence, and the guilt of that monster who has destroyed her.”

“ Certainly,” replied Somers.

Bridport then related the rise and progress of his daughter’s affection for Sir Thomas ; the means he took to convey her to his house ; dwelt with force and energy, accompanied by the feelings of a father, on the rape ; and her being afterwards conveyed to Reading.

Sir Charles and Somers, who till this time were not acquainted with the full extent of Sir Thomas’s conduct, could not avoid mingling their tears with those of the father.

Having gone through with this recital, he proceeded : “ After I left this house,
I hastened

I hastened to Bristol, and as one of the London stages was setting off, I took my place for Reading, and arrived there about three o'clock in the morning; when I retired to bed for a few hours, to recruit my strength, and arose about seven: then, taking my oak stick in my hand, proceeded in search of the place, which I presently found.

“ I had considered on what plan was best to pursue, and concluded the most probable means to gain admittance would be by artifice.

“ When I arrived at the house, I rung the bell at the outer gate; a servant attended, who demanded my business.

“ I pulled off my hat, and, scratching my head, assumed the west-country dialect: ‘ I’se be come,’ said I, ‘ vrom Zur Tum-mus; he said as how he should want me,

and desired I ſe would wait here vor un.' This kind of language," continued Bridport, " and the booriſh method I practiſed, together with my making uſe of Sir Thomas's name, had the deſired effect. The man requeſted I would walk in, and conducted me to the kitchen, where he aſked me ſeveral queſtions relative to his maſter, all which I answered with the ſame ſimplicity as before. Having ſatiſfied his enquiries, he ſet the breakfast equipage before me, and deſired I would make free. During this time I attentively ſurveyed the place and the ſervants, who conſiſted of two men and two women. I obſerved one of the maids carry from the kitchen two ſeparate trays, with breakfast equipage on each; heard them talk of a young lady, and afterwards of Mrs. Thompson."

" Now

“ Now mark,” said Somers, interrupting him, and addressing himself to Sir Charles : “ you hear this house was near Reading ; the very place where Miss Lefley was confined, or I am much mistaken. Well, sir,” continued Somers, turning to Bridport, “ proceed. I beg your pardon for interrupting you.”

“ When they mentioned Mrs. Thompson,” said Bridport, “ I concluded it must be my poor girl, as Sir Thomas went by that name ; and such were my feelings, I scarcely knew how to retain myself in my situation ; but I waited in expectation that I should shortly see her.

“ After breakfast I walked about the house, observed the maid come out of a room, and locking the door put the key in her pocket ; after which I beheld her take out another key, proceed to a dif-

ferent apartment at the further end of the passage, unlock the door, and go in; but as I heard no voices, I did not know there was any person in the rooms.

“ After spending the whole morning in the utmost anxiety, I heard one of the men expressing his surprise that the young lady had not rung her bell since breakfast, and asked the maid if she had not better wait on her. The maid replied it was out of her power, as she had not the key.

“ By this,” continued Bridport, “ I was able to learn, that, whoever the young lady was, she was under confinement; and I concluded my daughter was likewise in the same situation. The man went on, and observed, that the young lady was cursedly in the dumps. ‘ Aye, aye,’ rejoined the maid, ‘ she will know better before

before she is many days older ; Sir Thomas will let her into the secret.'

" I guessed the meaning," continued Bridport, " of this wretch's expression ; and was shocked to think a female could be so infamously wicked as to assist in the destruction of her own sex. Fortunately she left the room, and was followed by the man, or I believe I should have betrayed myself.

" I had not been long alone before I heard some person singing, in a plaintive style, the Lamentations of Mary queen of Scots. The sound was familiar to my ear ; I listened a minute, and being positive it was my daughter's voice, I could no longer contain myself, but grasping my oak stick, hastened to the door I had seen the maid lock in the morning.

" One of the men, who saw me running

ning towards it, I believe, began to suspect : he clapt his hand against my breast, and asked me where I was going. I made no answer, but driving him away, set my foot against the door, and burst it open. The fellow endeavoured to prevent my entering, but I rushed in, and after looking round the room discovered a young lady, but not my daughter."

" Hold," cried Somers : then taking up Clarissa's letter, he shewed it to Sir Charles, and asked him if he did not think those circumstances so far agreed.

" What sort of a young lady," said Sir Charles, " was this you mention?"

" One of the most lovely girls," replied Bridport, " I ever beheld : she seemed about nineteen years of age, and appeared greatly terrified at my approach."

" What

“What became of her?” resumed Sir Charles.

“I do not know,” replied Bridport; “but if you will permit me, I will relate what further passed.”

“By all means,” rejoined Sir Charles.

“As soon as I perceived this was not my unfortunate girl,” resumed Bridport, “I hastened towards the door for the purpose of pursuing my search further.

“The man who had endeavoured to prevent my entrance now seized me by my collar; I extricated myself from him, and with one blow felled him to the ground.

“I then rushed towards the other door which I had seen the maid enter in the morning; here I was again attacked by the other man.

“I swore

“ I swore instant death to any one who should molest me.

“ In a moment I heard the voice of my child exclaim, ‘ My father! my father!’ The sound thrilled through my heart, and gave me additional strength; I twice threw the man—he was a remarkably powerful fellow—but this oak stick, which I shall for ever revere, paid him the same compliment it had done to the other. I then burst open the door, and the first object that struck my sight was my child laying on the floor to all appearance dead.

“ The women, who witnessed the affray, had run to the further end of the passage.

“ I ordered them instantly to bring some spirits and water.

“ The

“The trembling wretches obeyed, and in a short time my poor girl was restored. Excuse me the recital,” continued he, bursting into tears, “I cannot proceed.”

“Compose yourself,” said Somers; “no doubt it was an affecting scene for a father.”

Bridport having recovered himself, went on: “My Sophia hung upon my neck, called me her deliverer, fell at my feet, and entreated pardon for a crime it seems she never wilfully committed. It was fortunate for me I had disabled the two servants; for so much was I weakened by this interview, that a child might have beat me down with a lath.

“After my first tumults were over, I concluded it would be the most expedient method instantly to quit the house; but determined first to see the young lady,
and,

and, if she had been carried there against her consent, to take her with me, if not, to reason with her on the impropriety of her conduct; but when I again entered the room I could see nothing of her.

“ I demanded of the women if she had passed; they were equally astonished with myself, and on searching the apartment, discovered that her cloak and bonnet were missing; then on looking towards the outward gate observed it open.

“ The two men had been able by this time to set up, and having heard that I was the father of Sophia, they did not appear inclined to dispute my possession of her; but made loud lamentations concerning the young lady; desired the women would bind up their heads, which were broke, although not sufficient to do them
any

any material injury, and declared they would go in search of her.

“ Finding their intentions, I judged it necessary to stay some time longer, till she should have been enabled to get effectually out of their reach.

“ I therefore grasped my oak stick, and protested I would knock the first man down that offered to stir.

“ The fellows were not in a situation to make any resistance; and therefore contented themselves with remaining in their original position.

“ I next searched every room in the house, determining to be fully satisfied whether she had really effected her escape or not, but could see nothing of her.

“ After having continued about an hour longer, I took leave of the place.

“ The

“ The greatest difficulty I had to surmount was on account of Sophia; she had been extremely ill, and was scarcely able to walk.

“ I assisted her with my arm, and sometimes carried her, till I reached the main road, where in a short time we obtained a conveyance to Reading, from which town we travelled in post chaises till we reached this spot.”

CHAP. VI.

“MR. Bridport,” said Somers, “you have rendered me an essential service by delivering the young lady you have been speaking of from her confinement. I was in the utmost consternation about her. She is a person for whom I have a great respect, and to whom I am left executor.

“I have,” continued Somers, “had frequent occasions to remark, that wickedness defeats itself in many particulars.

“Sir Thomas has acted infamously by Miss Bridport. This affair, by what I have heard this morning, will not terminate in its present state; but I shall forbear mentioning my intentions on the subject

ject at present, contenting myself with taking a review of his conduct.

“ The house near Reading was taken for her; to which place he likewise thought it most proper for Clarissa to be conveyed; and thus, while I was repining for the absence of Clarissa, her absence has been the means of Miss Bridport's release; for, if she had not been missing, no intelligence would have been obtained from Mrs. Gripe, nor could we have suspected her place of residence.

“ Here is one instance where wickedness defeats its own ends.

“ So likewise Sir Thomas remained behind, after Clarissa was gone, at Sir Charles's, for the purpose of injuring the character of Theodore, by attaching that guilt to him which belonged to himself, and by wounding the peace of Augusta; had

had he not done this, he would, in all probability, or according to human appearance, have wounded the peace of Clarissa, as he has done that of Miss Bridport. In fact, every act he committed has defeated itself. Clarissa is free, as likewise is Sophia.

“ If any person had asked him what he expected to obtain by possessing Miss Bridport, he would have answered, ‘ Happiness ;’ but here he has been foiled.

“ If he could be prevailed upon to state his present feelings, he would tell you he is miserable ; a prey to fear, and perpetually under anxiety lest his former conduct should be investigated. This is always the case,” continued Somers, “ where happiness is sought for by improper means : no solid comfort can ever
be

be the lot of man, unless it has its origin in virtue.

“ I am aware that one argument may be used against this doctrine ; and that is, the situation of Sophia, whose misfortune appears irremediable. I am of a contrary opinion ; but, that you may judge what I allude to, I will draw a case by way of inference.

“ I am not of that revengeful nature to prosecute a man for robbing my house, provided he has spent the money he deprived me of ; but, if he had not, or had the power of restoring me an equivalent, I certainly would pursue the means to obtain it.

“ Therefore, permit the case of Sophia to rest till we see what shall be the event.”

“ I un-

“ I understand you,” said Sir Charles, somewhat peevishly.

Somers was disconcerted at the manner of Sir Charles’s expressing himself : he had concluded, that as the guilt of Sir Thomas was manifest, he would no longer be desirous of courting his alliance ; but, to be more thoroughly satisfied, “ I hope,” said he, “ this conduct on the part of Sir Thomas will incline you to rid Augusta of all further trouble on his account.”

Sir Charles knew not how to act ; he had given Sir Thomas his promise, as likewise written to his sister in London, to which place Augusta was gone, mentioning her having formed an improper attachment for Theodore, who he represented in the blackest colours ; and further informed her, he wished to forward a match between his daughter and Sir Thomas,

mas, who he requested she would admit to her house, and endeavour to promote the wished for alliance.

Sir Charles, as I have had frequent occasion to observe, valued himself highly upon his penetration; he could not, therefore, prevail upon himself to confess his error to his sister, which it would be necessary for him to do, if he were to request her to forbid his visits; and therefore, when Somers put the last question, he replied, “ I shall not judge too hastily of Sir Thomas: as to his conduct respecting Miss Bridport, it certainly has been cruel; and before I admit him into my family, I shall insist on his making every reparation, both to her and her father, that is in his power.

“ Respecting Clarissa, if it be really true, still, as no harm is done, we ought
to

to overlook it. Marriage may cure these youthful follies ; Sir Thomas is wild, has come to the possession of a large estate, and has no one to control him ; you will allow this is some palliation."

Somers observed the countenance of Bridport, in which was portrayed strong marks of disapprobation ; and turning to Sir Charles, " It is of no use to reply," said he, " as your sentiments and mine are totally different ; therefore, if you have no objection, we will let the subject drop."

Sir Charles, feeling no inclination to pursue it in the presence of Bridport, was happy to have an end put to the conversation.

After assuring Bridport that he would exert his influence with Sir Thomas in his behalf, and reminding Somers of

his promise respecting Mrs. Somers, he took his leave.

As soon as he was gone, "This is the way the world argues in general," said Bridport; "he is young, has come to the possession of a large fortune: what is all this to me? Can it restore the happiness I have lost? It may plead an excuse with him, but it will be but a small palliation when he appears before his God."

"The world," replied Somers, "are silenced by the property the criminal is in possession of. Let us reverse the scene. Sir Charles has a daughter; if the son of a farmer had obtained possession of Augusta, as Sir Thomas had of Sophia, then would he tell a different tale; you would hear Sir Charles stigmatizing him with the name of a villain, a monster, and in all probability he would prosecute him to death;

death ; while society in general would execrate him, and think he richly deserved his fate. But Sir Thomas has wealth, and that, in a world like this, is a substitute for religion, and will plead an excuse for every vice."

Somers now went in search of Sophia, who he found considerably more composed than when she left the room.

A faint blush was visible on her cheek when he approached her, originating from a sense of her situation, and a suspicion that her father had acquainted him with the whole of her story.

• Somers endeavoured to remove it by a tender sympathising manner, which was perfectly natural to him; welcomed her to his house with the cordiality of a brother; ordered every attention to be paid her; and, that she might be rendered more

comfortable, hired another servant to attend her. Nor was he less attentive to her father; he endeavoured to restore that peace to his mind, which for some time he had been a stranger to.

The cordial welcome that Somers had given to Sophia on her arrival, the profound respect and tenderness with which he treated her, together with the kindness he had manifested to her father, placed him high in her estimation. She heard her father repeatedly declare his intention of being revenged on Sir Thomas, and dreaded lest he should attempt to put his threats in execution, and force her to become an accomplice, without which it would be impossible to carry on a prosecution.

In this perplexing dilemma she had no one to fly to, excepting Somers; he possessed

ferred the confidence of her father, and was certain his advice would have great weight with him. She likewise judged from his appearance, which wore the semblance of benignity; from his general character; but more particularly from the tender conduct she experienced; that she should be able, upon fairly stating her sentiments, to wean him over to her interest. .

Somers, in the mean time, viewed with regret the deadly hate that occupied the breast of Bridport against Sir Thomas, and feared lest it should interrupt the plan he had in agitation.

He likewise wished for an opportunity of consulting with Sophia alone, respecting her sentiments, that he might thereby know what would be the most conducive to her happiness.

Bridport having occasion to visit Bristol in the afternoon, Somers determined during his absence to spend the time with his daughter; he therefore sent his servant to enquire if she could indulge him with a few minutes' audience.

Sophia received the intimation with pleasure.

Somers having taken his seat beside her, "First," said he, "before I enter on the business that brought me here, I wish you to consider me not only as your friend, but as your brother; one who has your interest at heart, equal, if not superior, to a father; one who sincerely commiserates your case, and will do all in his power to relieve it. If, therefore, you consider me in this light, you will in return deal by me with candour, for without that I may be doing you an injury,
while

while I am attempting to render you a service."

Sophia thanked him for his generous intentions, and assured him she would answer any enquiry with the frankness he desired.

"Sir Thomas," resumed Somers, "has acted by you with a cruelty I shall not animadvert upon; at the same time he has been unguarded; the consequence of which is, that he has thrown himself into your power.

"You cannot compel him to restore you happiness; but I am of opinion, sooner than he would submit to a prosecution, he would by marriage restore your name to that lustre he has so wantonly deprived it of."

"Ah, Mr. Somers," said Sophia,

“ this is what I wished to speak with you upon.

“ I cannot become his prosecutor; revenge never can enter a breast like mine; and if it could, I have not the power to exercise it against him.”

“ It is not my wish,” resumed Somers, “ to carry the prosecution into effect; I mean to threaten it, with the hope it will compel him to do an act of justice.”

“ Let me entreat,” said Sophia, “ that you will leave him to the exercise of his own will. I cannot endure that he should think I am actuated either by a revengeful or a mercenary motive; neither should force be made use of in a connection of that nature, and if it were, it would be of little service to me.

“ One

“ One more question,” said Somers,
 “ and I have done : Do you love Sir
 Thomas ? ”

“ Love him ! ” exclaimed Sophia ;
 “ Heaven is my witness how much ! Yet
 permit me to say a few words in extenu-
 ation of this sentiment, or you will think
 it singular, after the virtuous education
 that was bestowed on me, I should place
 my heart upon a man of his libertine
 principles.

“ When he returned from the univer-
 sity he was beloved by every person in the
 house, even to the most menial servant ;
 and respected by all that knew him for
 his virtues and amiable carriage.

“ He was the pride of his father, while
 his mother adored him.

“ This was the man on whom I fixed
 my affection ; could I do less ? he who

at all times paid me unbounded respect, treated me with uncommon tenderness, and took every means within his power to inspire me with a sentiment in his favour.

“ He is now strangely altered for the worse. By the death of his father he lost his monitor, and was presently surrounded by the vicious, who have destroyed his principles, and led him into error. This has deprived him of my esteem ; but I still exist a fatal proof, that love can continue when estimation is gone.”

“ They,” resumed Somers, “ who aver that love cannot exist without esteem, maintain a manifest error ; I am another monument of its falshood. But, come, Sophia, you must endeavour to exilarate your spirits ; be assured, since you have
thus

thus candidly entrusted me with your sentiments, I will act by you in such manner as shall be most conducive to your future happiness: in the mean time, you must recruit your strength; amuse your mind with reading, and accept of nourishing food, or your constitution will not be able to bear up against this unavailing sorrow."

"As well might you conclude," replied Sophia, "that the dews from Heaven would compensate for a summer's drought, as to suppose nourishing food would restore a wretch oppressed as I am: no; all I ask is to be freed from the turmoil my father would engage me in; I shall then with peace and resignation sink into my grave, the only hope that now is left me to find an end to sorrow."

"Heaven forbid!" exclaimed Somers,

as

as he rose from his chair to hide a tear this subject had occasioned. "There is, I trust, still happiness in store for you."

Somers was unable to proceed; his soul was tuned to sympathy, he was therefore necessitated rather abruptly to leave the room, lest this conduct in him should add to her affliction; and as he found himself inadequate to the task of administering comfort, while his heart continued thus oppressed.

Having in some measure composed his mind, he next turned his attention to his young friends in London.

He wrote to Clarissa, requesting her return to his house; promised to be her brother and protector; informed her of Mrs. Bentley's bequest; yet did not think proper to state who had been the party that decoyed her from home, but contented

tented himself with informing her she had been grossly imposed on, which he promised to explain to her when he should have the pleasure of her company.

In this letter he enclosed another to Theodore, which he concluded Clarissa would have an opportunity of delivering to him, as he imagined she knew of his address.

To Theodore he explained the true motives that induced the messenger from London to visit him; acquainted him likewise with Augusta's sentiments in his favour, and the causes that had occasioned her singular coolness towards him; promised to write to her, and remove the unfavourable impression she had received on seeing him with Clarissa at the inn; and represented the necessity of his im-

mediate



mediate return, which last invitation he strongly pressed him to accept.

Somers likewise wrote to Freeman; declared he had been deceived respecting Theodore; that they had *all* been in an error; informed him he had invited Clarissa to his house, and that, if he should be inclined to honour him with a visit, he would more fully explain himself.

At the same time he wrote to Augusta, to whom he was more explicit: he stated the conduct of Sir Thomas at large; but directed her on no account to acquaint Freeman with it, as he knew a duel would be the consequence.

He likewise informed her he had written to the other parties, inviting them to his house, and concluded by hoping her aunt would shortly recover her health, which
would

would afford her an opportunity of returning.

These letters Somers immediately dispatched.

I shall now leave him with Mr. and Miss Bridport, while I attend to the party in town.

CHAP. VII.

WHEN Augusta arrived at her aunt's, whose name was Seaton, nothing could equal her surprise on finding her in perfect health.

Mrs. Seaton endeavoured to turn it off by a smile: "Really, my dear," said she, "I could exist no longer without you; and unless I had made use of this stratagem, I am confident your father would not have consented to part from you."

"It happens fortunate," replied Augusta, "as I have many circumstances to apprise you of, and shall be thankful for your advice."

It will be necessary, before I proceed, to give some account of Mrs. Seaton.

She

She was the only sister of Sir Charles and Edward's father, considerably younger than either of them, being at the time I mention not forty, and had the reputation of being a handsome widow.

Mr. Seaton, her late husband, was a man far advanced in years, who had married her for her personal accomplishments.

Mrs. Seaton being of a lively turn, and partial to company, led but an unpleasant life with her husband, who was extremely jealous and parsimonious.

At his decease he left her in the possession of half his fortune; the other half he bequeathed to Edward Freeman, her nephew.

Having become a widow, she determined never again to enter into the matrimonial state, lest her time should pass as unpleasantly as it had heretofore done.

It

It is a remark I have frequently made, that when a widow is left with fifty thousand pounds, report is sure to add a hundred thousand to it. This report induced Sir Thomas Blandford to form an acquaintance with her, and although she was considerably older than himself, and he possessed a large fortune, still he had no objection to a handsome widow with so extensive a portion.

Mrs. Seaton having made up her mind, Sir Thomas was of course unsuccessful in his application; but she having explained the extent of her income, made him bear his disappointment with a better grace.

Her next suitor was a Mr. St. Aubin, a West-India merchant. He had continued a bachelor, and was five-and-forty years of age.

This

This gentleman likewise met with a refusal; but did not relinquish all hope in consequence of it, as he still kept up an acquaintance with her, expecting that she would alter her opinion.

When Sir Thomas visited Gloucestershire, for the purpose of selling an estate to Sir Charles, and became acquainted with Augusta, it occurred to him that he should be the better able to succeed if she were with her aunt in London, than if she remained with her father, as he feared she would gain intelligence of his conduct to Sophia Bridport.

He therefore wrote to Mrs. Seaton, acquainting her of his intentions (if possible) of being allied to her family by a marriage with Augusta, and requested she would prevail on her to visit London.

In

In addition to this he related the affair of Theodore, who he represented as an adventurer that had introduced himself in the country for the purpose of creating a fortune by marriage; and likewise that he met with too great encouragement from her niece.

Mrs. Seaton, on the receipt of this, was alarmed on the account of Augusta, and determined to have her company in town; concluding she should be able to break off the connection with Theodore, and forward an union with Sir Thomas, whose family and fortune were unexceptionable. For this purpose she wrote to Augusta and Sir Charles, making illness her pretext.

Augusta had not been many minutes in her company before Freeman entered, and not observing her, threw himself upon a chair in the utmost agony of mind.

“Edward,”

“ Edward,” said Mrs. Seaton, “ what has happened to discompose you ?”

“ I have been ill used by a villain,” replied Freeman ; “ but if I find the young impostor, either his life or mine shall terminate the dispute.”

Augusta, who saw the anguish of Edward, ran towards him.

Freeman was surprised on meeting her, and instantly communicated the intelligence he had received from his servant, concerning Theodore and Clarissa.

“ You don’t seem in the least astonished,” continued he : “ when it reached me, I could scarcely believe it possible.”

Augusta explained, by informing him respecting her having detected them at the inn, and that she had wrote to Clarissa.

The servant now arrived at the door
with

with a couple of horses, and sent to acquaint his master.

Augusta did not till now conceive it was his intention to pursue them; she entreated he would abandon such a plan, and declared she should be wretched during his absence.

Mrs. Seaton likewise added her entreaty to that of Augusta's; at the same time ringing the bell, desired the servant to take the horses back, as her nephew had changed his mind.

Freeman felt himself necessitated to submit.

"I shall one day meet him," said he.

"Hold," cried Augusta, "leave him to the punishment of Heaven."

"May Heaven punish me if I do!" replied Freeman. "I stand indebted to him for more favours than one. You may

may remember he wanted to ingratiate himself into your favour, and had it not been for the innocent device I made use of, most probably he might have succeeded. I cannot imagine," continued he, "how Somers could be so much imposed on: he is certainly a good man; but his best friends must allow he is rather simple."

"Edward," resumed Augusta, "I cannot hear you speak against Mr. Somers: you may remember my father was equally partial to Theodore; nor was any one more fascinated with him than yourself. If it were an error in Somers, have you not been guilty of the same respecting Clarissa? and you now see how much you have been imposed upon."

Mrs. Seaton knew well (from Sir Thomas's letter, and from a few hints she had

received from her brother) who they were speaking of, but did not think it advisable to acquaint them with it; therefore, affecting a surprise, "Have the goodness," said she, "to let me bear a part in your conversation; who is this Theodore you are speaking of?"

Freeman was about to reply, when a servant entered and announced Mr. St. Aubin.

Augusta would have left the room, as she was in her travelling dress, but Mrs. Seaton prevented her: "Never mind St. Aubin," said she; "I am sure you must have seen him before."

"I have frequently heard you mention his name," replied Augusta, "but was never in his company."

St. Aubin entered the room. Mrs. Seaton introduced him to Augusta; and
Freeman

Freeman was slightly acquainted with him.

After some general conversation, "You appear dull," said St. Aubin, addressing himself to Freeman.

Freeman made no reply, but walked about the room in visible agitation.

"I hope," said Mr. St. Aubin, addressing himself to Mrs. Seaton, "all your friends are well in the country?"

"Perfectly well, I thank you: my nephew is only disturbed on account of some ill treatment he has met with from a stranger." Then turning to Freeman, "You were going," said she, "to acquaint me concerning it; who is this Theodore?"

"The devil himself cannot tell," replied Freeman; "some scoundrel that has been advertised, and a hundred
 H 2 pounds

pounds reward offered for his apprehension."

"What is this?" cried St. Aubin eagerly; "was he a felon, or left his friends?—I think I remember hearing something of it."

Freeman did not immediately reply; and as St. Aubin appeared anxious, Augusta recapitulated the circumstance.

"Can you form no idea," resumed St. Aubin, "where he is to be found?"

"No," cried Freeman; "the villain will take especial care I shall not be made acquainted with his residence."

"You say," resumed St. Aubin, turning to Augusta, "he was seen this afternoon at an inn in Maidenhead, accompanied by a young lady?"

Augusta replied in the affirmative.

"Bless me!" cried St. Aubin, starting up,

up, "speaking of the country reminds me I have some business to transact with a gentleman this evening, who leaves town early in the morning." Then, making his obeisance, retired.

"Do you not think," said Augusta, "that Mr. St. Aubin paid uncommon attention to the recital, and appeared wonderfully concerned?"

"I scarcely noticed him," replied Freeman.

"It is his usual method of attending to a story," said Mrs. Seaton; "I am confident he knows nothing of the fellow: if he had he would have mentioned it, as he is far from being a reserved character."

This remark put an end to the conversation respecting St. Aubin, and the residue of the evening was taken up with

various conjectures relative to Theodore and Clarissa.

About noon, on the ensuing day, as Freeman, Augusta, and Mrs. Seaton, were sitting in conversation, a servant entered, and informed them Sir Thomas Blandford was below.

“ By all means shew him up,” said Freeman.

The servant obeyed.

“ I have used him ill,” continued Freeman, “ by suspecting him wrongfully, and insulting him with those suspicions, for which I must apologise.”

“ Let me quit the room,” said Augusta.

“ On no account,” rejoined Mrs. Seaton; “ Sir Thomas is my intimate friend. I am positive you will esteem him when you are better acquainted.”

“ I know

“ I know too much of him,” replied Augusta, “ ever to esteem him.”

Sir Thomas entered : he started on seeing Freeman.

Mrs. Seaton welcomed him to town, and introduced her visitors.

Freeman advanced, and having acknowledged his error, declared he was sorry that he should have entertained so unworthy an opinion of him.

Sir Thomas appeared confounded, but desired he would think no more of it.

“ You appear unusually dull,” said Mrs. Seaton ; “ have you left all your vivacity in the country ?”

“ I am fatigued with travelling,” replied Sir Thomas ; and then attempted a smile, contrary to his feelings.

CHAP. VIII.

SIR Thomas travelled post from Bristol, and reached the house near Reading about three hours after Clarissa and Sophia were gone.

He was filled with anxious hope, and his desires inflamed to the highest pitch.

Nothing could equal his disappointment, when he was informed Clarissa had effected her escape.

He threw himself in a chair, and gave way to a train of reflections that made him worse.

The men had only answered his enquiry concerning Clarissa; he knew nothing of Sophia being gone till he desired
a fer-

a servant to attend him with a key to her apartment.

The servant appeared confounded: Sir Thomas repeated the order. "She is gone," replied the maid; "it was her father who rescued them both."

This reply benumbed the faculties of Sir Thomas; he stood like a statue, as if he had neither life nor motion: at length he resumed his seat, and desired the servant to quit the room.

He now took a review of past occurrences; the veil at once fell from his eyes. Till this period he knew not the nature of his attachment for Sophia; he had been hurried into excesses by unruly passions, that had kept him in ignorance respecting the state of his heart, and made him conclude she was more an object of desire than affection.

Hitherto he had looked on her as his mistress ; for that intent he possessed her, and as such he had retained her.

Her absence plainly convinced him she was necessary to his happiness : he called to his mind her conduct, from the time he first addressed her ; the tenderneſs with which she had always treated him, till he put it out of her power by his conduct, which gained her resentment ; but even this resentment on her ſide made her appear more lovely in his eyes. It reminded him ſhe had never been a willing miſtreſs, but ſubmitted to his careſſes through imperious neceſſity.

He recollected ſhe was always in tears, was never ſeen to ſmile, and many a morning when he awoke, and miſſed her from his bed, he obſerved her ſitting dreſſed in the chamber, it being impoſſible for
her

her to get out, the door being always locked on the outside by the servant, consistent with his order.

He remembered likewise her altered person, her emaciated form, the effects of never-ceasing sorrow ; and afforded him strong corroborative proof that her heart abhorred the transaction.

He rung the bell ; a servant attended :
 “ Did Sophia,” said he, “ leave no message for me ? ”

“ None,” replied the maid.

“ What, not one word ? ” said he, and heaved a sigh.

“ We found a piece of paper,” replied the maid, “ on which are a few words written with a pencil.”

“ Where is it ? ” cried he hastily.

The maid produced it.

Sophia had taken the opportunity,

while her father was searching the house for Clarissa, to write it; and not having either pen or ink in the room, made use of her pencil.

Sir Thomas eagerly seized it from the maid, and read as follows:

‘Farewel, Sir Thomas; dear to my heart, but detestable to my recollection!—Fear nothing from me: I can die; but cannot seek revenge.’

“Ah, my God!” exclaimed he, “what have I not done!—How have I destroyed this lovely girl, who I ought to have protected!—What would I give for an interview with her!—What would I not forfeit, if I could undo that which is past!” Then turning to the servant, who was still in the room, “Shew me to her chamber,” said he; “there will I spend this night, in ruminating on her worth.”

The

The maid conducted him.

The first object that attracted his notice was the piano, with which she had frequently passed a solitary hour; a note-book laying upon it open, he viewed the song; it was the Lamentation of Mary queen of Scots.

Beside the book lay a few lines of her own composing, and seemingly for the same tune.

He took it up, and read as follows:

“ Ah! why does my heart still repine
For the object it ought to detest!

Why thus am I loth to resign

• The passion that tortures my breast?

Why still at his name do I sigh,

As if 'twould afford me relief!

Since nothing is left but to die,

A martyr—to love and to grief!”

These

These few lines, although of simple construction, contained a subject that cut him to the soul: he read it a hundred times, then played the tune on the piano and accompanied it with the words, till his feelings were wrought up to such an excess, that he threw himself upon the bed in an agony of woe, and burst into tears.

In this situation he lay for some hours, lost in thought, till a servant, who was surprised at his long silence, tapped at the door, and enquired if he would have any thing dressed for his supper.

“Nothing,” replied Sir Thomas; “leave me for the night.”

In fact, his heart was too full; he could not think of eating, but remained till the morning, without taking off his clothes.

As

As soon as the dawn of day approached he arose, and began seriously to consider what step was best to be pursued.

He had made proposals of marriage to Sir Charles in behalf of Augusta; but having examined his heart, and discovered a sentiment which hitherto was unknown to him, he could not endure the idea of an act that must lessen the affection of Sophia; yet still he felt a necessity of carrying a fair outside.

He knew Sir Charles had written to Mrs. Seaton in his behalf; he had likewise been the means of her sending an invitation to Augusta; he therefore determined to address her, and if he met with a refusal upon his first application, which he had every reason to expect, then to take the first opportunity of going in search of Sophia; not that he intended
to

to marry her: she was a farmer's daughter; such a match would be degrading to his pride, and would subject him to the ridicule of his young friends. She had likewise been his mistress, and although he was aware her heart never approved of the transaction, yet the world was ignorant of this.

He possessed a latent hope that he should be able to prevail on her to live with him on his own terms; and thus he argued:—"First," said he, "she has a strong and grounded attachment for me; an affection of some years' duration is not easily done away; this will prevent her from thinking of another: and if," said he, "she ever were to harbour such an idea, the situation I have reduced her to will prevent her from putting it in execution."

Another

Another reflection was, that being thus reduced she had now nothing further to dread. "Query," said he, "in which situation will she appear to most advantage in the eyes of the world, the one she is at present in, ruined and forsaken; or protected by me and supported in affluence? No doubt she is with her father in some wretched apartment, no servant to attend her, and scarcely sufficient food to support nature. If, then, I place her father in a situation similar to what I deprived him of, such an act will ensure his gratitude.

"If, likewise, in addition to this, I settle a few hundreds a year on her, she certainly then can have no objection; neither can her father.

"He must be aware it will be impossible for me to marry her; and what is marriage

marriage after all? it is but a ceremony, and frequently occasions more misery than happiness."

Thus argued Sir Thomas, without calling to his aid one virtuous sentiment to oppose against his doctrine.

Having made up his mind respecting his future plan, he set off for London, and reached Mrs. Seaton's as before mentioned.

Sir Thomas took the first opportunity after Freeman had left the room to speak with Augusta in the presence of Mrs. Seaton.

"Miss Freeman," said he, "permit me to acquaint you with the cause of my visit here this day.

"During my short acquaintance with Sir Charles, I was able to discover that there was no attachment on your side towards

wards your cousin, and the event justified my suspicions.

“ I then made bold to solicit your father in my behalf, that I might have his permission to address you, to which request he gave his hearty concurrence.

“ Having the honour to be acquainted with Mrs. Seaton, I took the liberty of waiting on you here to prefer my suit, and to declare—”

“ Stop, Sir Thomas,” said Augusta, interrupting him; “ I never can attend to this subject from you. My father, I am confident, has not heard the whole particulars relative to Mr. Bridport and his daughter; if he had, he certainly would not so readily have acquiesced with your proposal.

“ It is a circumstance of that nature, which ought, and always will prevent me
from

from attending to any offer you may have to make, unless it be to withdraw from my company; this would give me far greater satisfaction than any other."

"Augusta," cried Mrs. Seaton, "how can you treat Sir Thomas in this manner? what objection can you have? Who is this Bridport and his daughter? some foolish love affair I suppose of no import."

Augusta thought there would be an indelicacy in explaining the particulars; and Sir Thomas, whose feelings were considerably hurt on account of Sophia, could not force his tongue to utter any thing in disparagement of her, which he must have done had he undertook to defend himself, and therefore both remained silent.

Mrs. Seaton having waited half a minute for a reply, "If I may be allowed
to

to give my opinion," continued she, " this is not the reason that dictates your refusal; pray, Sir Thomas, do you know any thing of a strolling gentleman who visited at my brother's, and passed by the name of Theodore?"

" I have seen him," replied Sir Thomas; " he certainly was an imposter."

" You have been informed, I presume," rejoined Mrs. Seaton, " that he ran away with a Miss Lesley?"

Sir Thomas blushed.

" Augusta," continued she, " detected them together yesterday in the afternoon."

" You surprise me!" cried Sir Thomas; then turning to Augusta, enquired, with great eagerness, if there was any other person in their company.

" None,"

“None,” replied Augusta; but why this eagerness on your part? this evident surprise! I thought you were always of opinion it would be the case, and even ventured to predict as much.”

Sir Thomas saw his error, and endeavoured to reassume a composure. “I could have no motive,” said he, “but a desire to convince those who ventured to oppose my opinion.”

“What motive,” said Mrs. Seaton, “could Sir Thomas possibly have in asking a plain question? I see how it is, you want to find an excuse for a vagrant; it is the recollection of him that prompts you to behave in this manner.”

“I beg your pardon,” resumed Sir Thomas sarcastically, “you certainly mistake; Miss Freeman has too much good sense

sense to throw away a thought upon such a worthless fellow; I cannot imagine how you could suspect as much."

Augusta felt the full force of this reply, more particularly as she beheld the sarcastic smile that accompanied it; and therefore replied, "It is the recollection of your character, Sir Thomas, that prompts my refusal, and obliges me to look on your proposal as an insult; my aunt, therefore, must excuse me from remaining any longer in your company," and immediately quitted the room.

A short silence ensued.

"I am extremely concerned," said Mrs. Seaton, "that a niece of mine should thus demean herself; be assured her conduct to you originates in the fellow we have been speaking of."

"It does not affect me in the least,"
replied

replied Sir Thomas ; “ I shall pay no further attention to it.

“ If Miss Freeman had approved of my proposal, I should have been happy in the alliance ; but, as it is otherwise, I shall console myself with the reflection, that the world is not so barren of women, nor my fortune so contemptible, but I shall stand a chance of meeting with better success elsewhere.

“ At the same time permit me to add, that I shall ever retain a grateful sense of the obligation I am under to you for the trouble you have given yourself in this business.”

Mrs. Seaton again regretted the cause from whence this disappointment originated, and made every apology in behalf of her family that she could suggest, after which Sir Thomas withdrew.

She

She then sent for Augusta, who she severely reprimanded for her conduct to Sir Thomas, threw out some unpleasant allusions respecting Theodore, and concluded by informing her she should immediately make Sir Charles acquainted with it.

CHAP. IX.

TIME now passed on heavily with Augusta; her aunt, who considered her highly culpable, scarcely articulated a sentence during the day.

On the following morning Augusta, to relieve her spirits, determined to walk out and purchase a few trifles she stood in need of.

Mrs. Seaton offered her carriage, but Augusta refused; alleging, as the day was fine, she should prefer walking: she therefore left her aunt's, attended by a servant, and proceeded towards Bond-street.

Theodore, who had taken up his residence at the Gloucester coffee-house till
he

he should adopt some plan for his future conduct, being tired of remaining in the house, endeavoured to beguile a melancholy hour by walking.

He had scarcely been out ten minutes, before he met Augusta.

She blushed, but determined on passing him without notice.

Theodore observed the confusion she was in; but not knowing the affection she possessed, did not attribute it to the cause from whence it originated. He concluded she must have been made acquainted with his innocence respecting Clarissa, and that her confusion was occasioned by her ill-founded suspicions; to this cause he likewise attributed her evident wish to avoid him.

Theodore was resolved to have some conversation with her; he approached

her, and taking hold of her hand, requested she would explain the meaning of the note left for Clarissa.

Augusta drew her hand forcibly from him, with marked disapprobation seated in her countenance.

“ Pardon me,” said Theodore, “ it is not my meaning to renew a subject that you repeatedly informed me was an insult; but I cannot endure you should harbour so infamous an opinion of me as that note conveyed: so far from seducing Clarissa from the cottage, I was in some measure her protector.”

Augusta, surpris'd at this declaration, desired he would explain himself.

Theodore stated his reasons for quitting Somers; gave an account of his journey till he met Clarissa; and concluded by observing, that the guilty party was one
whom

whom she should have had no suspicion of.

"Who is it you hint at?" said Augusta.

"Freeman," replied Theodore.

"How shallow is this artifice!" resumed Augusta contemptuously; "I am ashamed to think I have been prevailed upon to listen to you: Edward would scorn the transaction."

Theodore entreated she would attend to what further he had to advance. He then related the account as he received it from Clarissa; and concluded with informing her of his meeting with Freeman's servant, who was in pursuit of her.

"This cannot be true," replied Augusta; "Edward is now in town, and in a state of the utmost anxiety on her account."

“ Oh, I don’t doubt it,” rejoined Theodore : “ she has, thank Heaven, escaped him ; for, notwithstanding the specious pretence made use of, that he wanted to force her into a marriage, it is plain enough such was not his intention, as he ordered her to be conveyed to a house where Clarissa, from circumstances, was satisfied he had a girl in keeping.”

“ I will hear no more,” cried Augusta ; “ it is infamous in you to make use of these insinuations against a man who would blush for such a conduct.” Then beckoning to the servant, she walked on a few paces, and turned into a perfumer’s shop.

Theodore, who wished, if possible, to convince her of his innocence, stopt at a printseller’s window till she should return.

Augusta, in the mean time, ruminated on what had passed. Theodore had related

lated his story with an air of truth that would have carried conviction with it, had he not charged her cousin with the crime. After a few minutes' respite, which calmed her spirits, she repented having parted from him so hastily, without giving him a caution to avoid Freeman, who had so frequently vowed to be revenged if he fell in his way.

She could not forget how dear he was to her recollection; and although she durst not give him any encouragement, in consequence of the many unpleasant reports raised against him, yet she was truly anxious for his safety.

As she left the shop she observed him waiting, and, forgetting her resentment, "Theodore," said she, "Mr. Somers, who is my intimate friend, has a high respect for you; on his account, therefore,

fore, I think it my duty to give you a caution :—avoid Edward :—he conceives you guilty, and determines on revenge. If he should come in your sight, shun him.”

“ Villain !” cried Theodore, “ does he think to escape the odium he deserves by stigmatizing me behind my back ? but we shall meet, I trust ; and I have no doubt, in so just a cause, I shall triumph.”

At this juncture a carriage passed, and Augusta curtsied to the person in it.

In a moment it stopt, and Mr. St. Aubin had his hand on the door for the purpose of alighting.

While the carriage was drawing up, three men approached Theodore, and took hold of his arms. “ Your most obedient,” said one of them ; “ what, we have found you at last.”

Theodore

Theodore attempted to resist ; but they called a hackney-coach, and put him in.

A crowd having assembled, the men informed them it was an arrest, which satisfied their enquiries.

Two of the men went into the coach with Theodore, while the third whispered to the coachman, who immediately drove off ; after which the man ran with speed a contrary way.

This was executed in less than a minute ; while Augusta and the servant were spectators, as likewise was St. Aubin, who now alighted from his carriage, and offered to convey her home.

• Augusta consented, being in such a state of agitation as scarcely to know what she did.

They presently arrived at Mrs. Seaton's.

During the ride St. Aubin asked her several questions respecting the young man she was in conversation with ; but being extremely faint, and obliged to have frequent recourse to her smelling-bottle, it prevented her from attending to him.

When she reached her aunt's, and had in some measure recovered, St Aubin asked her what the young man said when his carriage stopt.

" Nothing," replied Augusta.

" Did he not mention my name?" resumed St. Aubin.

" I did not hear him," replied Augusta.

" Do you know his name," said St. Aubin, " or any of his relations?"

" He goes by a borrowed name," replied Augusta, " and has carefully concealed

cealed his own ; have you then any knowledge of him ?”

“ Not much,” replied St. Aubin ; “ and what little I have is not to his advantage. I remember him as a clerk to a merchant in the city, who he has defrauded ; therefore, should you see him again, I would have you shun his society.”

Augusta sighed and turned pale : “ Do you know,” said she, “ to what amount he has defrauded his employer ?”

“ He has taken some cash,” replied St. Aubin, “ and likewise some family miniatures set in diamonds, which are worth upwards of five hundred pounds.”

“ Good Heaven !” said Augusta, “ he shewed me those miniatures, and said he revered them, as they were the representation of his parents.”

St. Aubin appeared disconcerted, and

walked to the window. "Did he mention the name of his parents?" resumed St. Aubin.

"Never," replied Augusta; "nor the name of his relations: he said he had a particular reason for keeping it a secret."

"He has no parents," rejoined St. Aubin, "but is a child of charity."

"You surprise me," resumed Augusta; "he has received a very liberal education."

"More shame for him to ill use the friend that gave it him," rejoined St. Aubin.

The recital of these circumstances had so much oppressed Augusta, and Mrs. Seaton entering the room at this time, she retired, leaving St. Aubin and her aunt to converse together.

St. Aubin related the preceding scene

to

to Mrs. Seaton, which she eagerly attended to for the purpose of making a few animadversions on it to her niece ; and likewise to communicate it to Sir Charles. In which conversation I shall leave them, while I attend to Theodore.

The coachman drove slowly, went up the New Road, turned through Kentish-town, followed his course up to Highgate, after which he descended the hill, and drove through Holloway to Islington.

Theodore was in great agitation, and asked a variety of questions concerning where they were taking him.

“ You are with your friends,” replied the men, “ therefore make your mind perfectly easy. It was the only method that could be adopted to place you beyond the power of those you have most reason to fear.”

Having

Having reached Islington, they stopt at the door of a small public-house.

A gentleman made his appearance, and beckoned to the men, who immediately left the coach and handed the stranger in. Having seated himself, he desired the coachman to drive to Kensington. As they proceeded, the gentleman asked Theodore if he was the same person lately at Cliffdown-lodge in Gloucestershire, the seat of Mr. Somers, and who passed by the name of Theodore.

Theodore answered in the affirmative.

“Your uncle,” continued the gentleman, “has gained intelligence of your being in London, and is anxious to get you out of the way before your parents return to England, as their arrival is daily expected. Singular as the treatment you have met with this morning may appear,
yet

yet it was the only plan that could be devised, as he has an eye upon the person he employed to take you.

“ My advice is, that you leave London immediately, and return from whence you came.

“ Mr. Somers is your friend; with him you may remain in safety. Place a firm reliance on him; and, if you should be discovered, apply to the person who first advised your departure, and he will find some means to set you free. Here,” continued he, “ is a purse with an hundred guineas; take it, and pursue your journey, but on no account visit the Gloucester coffee-house.”

Theodore requested he would explain to whom he stood indebted for this act of friendship.

“ There you must excuse me,” replied
the

the gentleman; "the knowledge of it can render you no service, and may, if repeated, do your friend an injury."

"Can you," said Theodore, "satisfy me who it was that lodged the information against me? that, by so doing, I may know whom to avoid."

"It was my intention," replied the gentleman: "her name is Augusta Freeman."

The heart of Theodore sunk within him on the receipt of this intelligence; he could not refrain from shedding a tear, and drew out his handkerchief to wipe it away. "Is it possible," said he, "that Augusta could act with such wanton cruelty?"

"How is this!" rejoined the stranger; "why are you distressed on hearing the information came from her?"

"Alas!"

"Alas!" said Theodore, "I loved her with sincerity, and concluded her far too generous to adopt a conduct so malicious."

"And yet she has done it," rejoined the gentleman: "it will teach you, in return, to despise her as you ought: a conduct so despicable in her, ought to obliterate your ill-placed attachment.—Trust me, she is infinitely beneath your notice. I presume she has considered herself insulted by your addresses, and has taken this step to be revenged on you:—never, for the future, have any thing to say to a revengeful character."

The coach having arrived at Kensington, they alighted.

Theodore ordered a post-chaise, and having taken leave of the gentleman, pursued his way to Bristol.

I shall

I shall now return to Mrs. Seaton's.

Mr. St. Aubin remained with her about a quarter of an hour, while he blackened the character of Theodore, and advised her if he should attempt to gain a footing in her house that she would forbid him; but concluded by giving it as his opinion from what he saw in the morning that he was taken into custody for the robbery, and, if such were the case, he most probably would accept the offer of being sent abroad in preference to taking his trial for the offence.

When Mr. St. Aubin was gone, Mrs. Seaton sent for Augusta, and severely reprimanded her for holding a conversation with so notorious a character as Theodore, or for remaining one moment in his company, after the knowledge she
had

had of his infamous conduct respecting the young woman who he seduced from her home.

At this juncture Freeman entered.

Augusta had intended to speak seriously with Edward concerning the account she received from Theodore, but the relation given by St. Aubin made her conclude it was totally without foundation.

While Mrs. Seaton was acquainting Edward with what had passed, the post arrived, and the servant entering with letters, put an end to the conversation.

Freeman opened his letter which came from Somers, and after reading a few lines, "Clarissa virtuous, and Theodore innocent!" said he; "impossible!"

Augusta, who had perused hers, rejoined, "It is absolutely true, as far as relates to Clarissa."

"Why

"Why has he not mentioned the guilty party?" rejoined Freeman; "he knows nothing what it is to feel as I do."

"He is fearful of a duel taking place," replied Augusta, "and therefore has omitted it."

"By your reply," rejoined Freeman, "I should consider you are acquainted with the particulars; I will positively see the letter."

Augusta ran out of the room, and was able to commit it to the flames before Edward reached her.

"If you will not tell me who it is," resumed Freeman, "will you acquaint me where to find her?"

"He did not mention where she resides," replied Augusta, "but said he had sent for her to his house. I think," continued she, "Clarissa cannot accept
his

his invitation consistent with propriety. It would appear singular in the eyes of the world, as Somers is yet but a young man, and separated from his wife."

"Certainly it would," rejoined Freeman; "I cannot imagine how he could think of making such a request: he has likewise invited me, concluding she will accept his offer; but I know Clarissa better, and therefore shall not leave town till I hear further."

"You must not attach a blame to Mr. Somers," resumed Augusta; "you forget Mrs. Bentley by her will committed her to his care; he means to fix her in some private family."

Augusta now opened a letter which came from her father; he was silent on the conduct of Sir Thomas; professed himself happy that she had arrived safe
in

in town, where he expected shortly to be employed on a pleasant business, relative to Somers; and then gave a brief account from whence his sorrows had originated. In doing this he mentioned the name of Sternhold.

“Sternhold!” said Augusta, “surely I have heard that name.” Then turning to Mrs. Seaton, asked her if she was not acquainted with such a family.

“I am not intimate with them,” replied Mrs. Seaton; “we met at a friend’s house, and I have once been there on a tea-party. It is rather rude of me, as I should have invited them in return: they are worthy characters.”

“Have they a daughter?” resumed Augusta.

“They have,” replied Mrs. Seaton: “she is married to a worthless fellow,
poor

poor unhappy creature!—she is greatly to be pitied.”

“ I am inclined to think you have been misinformed,” resumed Augusta: “ will you have the goodness to state your reasons for so saying.”

“ A mere beggar,” resumed Mrs. Seaton, “ whose estate turned out to be worth nothing, married her for the purpose of obtaining a comfortable home at Sternhold’s: he had the address to cheat them out of a considerable sum of money, and that being spent, he has sent their daughter home, with a child, for them to support; since which, I understand, he has become affluent, and takes no notice of her.”

“ There is always two ways of telling a story,” resumed Augusta. “ It will surprise you when I relate, that the Sternholds

holds have done all in their power to create a separation between them ; and that her husband, if he thought his wife had the smallest affection for him, would be happy to receive her."

" His wife, poor creature," rejoined Mrs. Seaton, " when I saw her last, was the picture of sorrow. I am sure she has too great a regard for the fellow."

" Her name is Somers," resumed Augusta.

" Yes, yes," said Mrs. Seaton ; " it is the same person you mean."

" She is the wife of my particular friend, Mr. Somers of Cliffdown-lodge," rejoined Augusta ; " and to convince you how much you have been imposed on, I will read you a few lines from my father's letter.

" ' The Sternholds, by falsehoods and
infamous

infamous misrepresentations, dictated by malice that would disgrace a fiend, took every opportunity of poisoning the mind of their daughter, and alienating her affections from her husband; after which, taking advantage of his misfortunes, they offered their house as a lure to draw her from her duty; protesting, at the same time, that they would render her no assistance if she obstinately determined on remaining with him. Mrs. Somers fell into the snare, and cruelly abandoned him, taking with her his infant daughter.' "

" You see," said Freeman, who had lent an attentive ear, " how much you have been deceived. I am one that has witnessed his sorrow: I know that he adores his wife, and regrets her loss; so

great an effect has it had on him, that he is reduced to a skeleton."

"If this be the case," rejoined Mrs. Seaton, "I certainly have been grossly imposed on; and yet I had my intelligence from an intimate friend of Mrs. Sternhold."

"Very probably," replied Augusta; "they will naturally put the best gloss on their conduct. But you were saying that you ought to invite them in return for your visit: I wish to see Mrs. Somers, and have some conversation with her; will you therefore oblige me by requesting her company?"

"I must invite the Sternholds likewise," replied Mrs. Seaton, "or it will appear singular. Let me consider:—Friday I am engaged; Saturday I expect a friend. Suppose I say Tuesday next?"

The

The day being settled, Freeman retired to acquaint Somers by letter of the circumstance, and to offer his service, if there should be an occasion in restoring her; as likewise to request he would acquaint him with Clarissa's address; and desiring an answer by return of post.

CHAP. X.

HAVING dispatched this letter, he waited with the utmost anxiety for one in return.

He again felt, in its full force, the attachment he had for Clarissa, which the conduct he was led to imagine she adopted had not been able to do away.

He fled to Augusta for the purpose of advising with her on what method would be the most proper to pursue, when he should have obtained her address.

The heart of Augusta was too much oppressed at this time to find leisure for any other subject excepting Theodore. She felt a real pleasure when she considered

dered he had not been guilty of the transaction laid to his charge by Sir Thomas, blamed herself for having called him a villain in her letter to Clärissa, and endeavoured to palliate the charge made use of against him by St. Aubin; therefore, when Freeman went to her for advice, instead of answering his enquiries, she entered into a conversation concerning the subject that was nearest to her heart.

“Do you not think,” said she, “the tale related by St. Aubin is rather improbable?”

“He first informs me Theodore is a child of charity. If he is, does it not appear strange that he should have received so liberal an education, and possess so independent a spirit?”

“The independence of his spirit,” replied Freeman, “originates in his educa-

tion ; neither is it in the least singular for a youth brought up by charity to complete his studies at an university."

" Very possible," resumed Augusta : " his foster-father must have been extremely partial to him, or he would not have bestowed such an expence upon him. I should have imagined the conduct of his friend, in this particular, would have taught him to expect something more than a subordinate situation in life. If his friend meant to raise him to no higher station than a clerk in an office, why did he bestow this education on him ?"

" There is no accounting for these things," said Freeman ; " the conduct of Theodore may have made him alter his determination in his favour."

" And yet," resumed Augusta, " he did not appear to be depraved in principle.

I can

I can hardly think that was the case; nor can I think he would defraud his friend, who, by acting so generously by him, had taught him to expect some permanent support."

"What motive," said Freeman, "could St. Aubin have in relating an untruth?"

"I know not," replied Augusta; "but yet it certainly does appear untrue; for if I admit that Theodore really is a child of charity, and that he was wickedly inclined, he must have had frequent opportunities, as a clerk in a merchant's counting-house (which St. Aubin declares he was), to have defrauded his employer of monies to a considerable amount; but, on the contrary, I am informed he took only a small sum, his principal theft being two miniatures set in diamonds, worth above five hundred pounds.

“ Those valuable miniatures do not usually lay in a counting-house desk for clerks to view ; he must have been very intimate with his employer, and probably high in his confidence, or he would not have been enabled to lay his hands upon them.

“ If this be the case, how could Theodore, who appears so sensible a young man, think of losing his friend for such a trifle ; a friend who had thus educated him, and thereby taught him to expect something above mediocrity ? These circumstances,” continued Augusta, “ I cannot reconcile with common sense ; more particularly when I reflect on the situation he was in when Somers first beheld him ; a situation which he did not put on for the purpose of exciting his compassion. He had walked his shoes almost from off his feet ; had
not

not a shilling in his possession, nor any thing of value save the miniatures; why, therefore, did he not dispose of them? On the contrary, Somers beheld him wiping a tear from his eye as he surveyed them; and, when he was driven to an explanation, he declared they were the representation of his parents. He even descended to apply for the most menial situation for support. Would a person of his appearance have requested this, while he had such valuable trinkets in his possession?—No:—he would have converted them into money to supply his wants, unless he set a great store by them; which he would not have done if they had not been the resemblance of the parties he described. Besides which, did not the messenger from London declare what Theodore advanced was true?

“ When I think of these circumstances,” continued Augusta, “ I cannot reconcile myself to the belief of the tale recited by St. Aubin.”

“ I must confess,” rejoined Freeman, “ now you review these circumstances, it does appear singular ; and yet, Mr. St. Aubin is a man whose word will pass in the city for thousands, and is of such respectability that should entitle him to belief.”

“ There is some mystery in it,” rejoined Augusta, “ which I should be happy to unravel.”

“ I am of the same opinion,” resumed Freeman, “ and would set about it immediately if I could devise the means.”

“ The most probable method,” rejoined Augusta, “ is to wait on Mr. Quibble

at

at Thaives Inn, the person to whom the hand-bill referred."

"You are right," said Freeman, taking up his hat; "my curiosity is so much excited, I shall not rest till I am satisfied."

Freeman now pursued his way for Thaives Inn, and on enquiring for Mr. Quibble was shown into a small office.

A clerk informed him Mr. Quibble was engaged, but asked him if he could not advise him respecting the business he came upon.

Freeman replied he called respecting a young man who was advertised.

"Who is that?" cried a gruff voice from an adjoining room.

The clerk went to the door, "A person," said he, "that has called to speak with me."

The clerk seemed in agitation, and taking Freeman into the passage, told him that the reference in the hand-bill was certainly at Mr. Quibble's, but the gentleman who would receive the information, if he had any to convey, lived near the exchange.

"I am no informer," rejoined Freeman; "I came to ask a few questions; pray, who is this young man?"

"I really cannot tell," replied the clerk; "but the gentleman I shall refer you to, will be able to give you every satisfaction. If you will wait here a minute, I will attend you to him."

The clerk returned into the office, and after signifying to his employer that a little business called him out, he accompanied Freeman to a court near the Royal Exchange, and knocking at a
private

private door, requested to speak with Mr. Solomon.

Freeman was left in a small room while the clerk and Mr. Solomon had some conversation; after which the clerk left the house, and Freeman was desired to walk up stairs.

“Is your name Quibble?” said Freeman.

“No, shir,” replied the Jew, “my name is Ishaac Sholoman at your shervice.”

Freeman produced the hand-bill.

“Vat,” said the Jew, “you vant to lodge de information, to finger de hundred pounds? but de young man ish taken, sho you need give yourshelf no furdur trouble.”

“Hearkee, Mr. Jew,” rejoined Freeman, “let me have none of your infolence, or I shall shave your beard for you.

I did

I did not come here as an informer, but merely to ask who he is, and to render him a service if it lay in my power."

"Vat you shay? you vill shave my beard?" cried the Jew; "you are vary goot, but my beard shall stay vere it ish, nor vill I ansher your idle questions.—Vat I shuppose you are de person who shent de letter about him before, but did not put your name to it."

Freeman found he had taken a wrong method to acquire any intelligence, and therefore assumed a different tone: "I would scorn such a practice," said he; "I had too high an opinion of the young man to do him an injury. My name is Freeman; an intimate acquaintance of Mr. Somers at whose house he resided; and from the opinion I was able to form of Theodore's conduct, I cannot reconcile

cile it with what I have heard from Mr. St. Aubin.

"Are you acquainted wid Mr. Sht. Aubin?" resumed the Jew.

"I am," replied Freeman.

"I shinsherely beg your pardon," said Solomon; "vill you pleash to take a shair. Mr. Sht. Aubin ish a vary wordy shentleman; vat hash he told you about de young man?"

Freeman recapitulated it.

"I am afraid," resumed Solomon, "it ish all too true."

"Can you inform me," said Freeman, "who it is that Theodore has defrauded?"

"I can tell you noting about it," replied Solomon; "you musht go to Mr. Sht. Aubin."

"You

"You are a friend of Sht. Aubin's I find," said Freeman.

"Mr. Sht. Aubin ish my vary goot friend," rejoined Solomon; "I am hish broker."

"Had I known as much," resumed Freeman, "I would not have troubled you. My only reasons were these: Theodore has been introduced to my family; and if perchance he should again have an opportunity of visiting it, I should not think proper to encourage him, if what Mr. St. Aubin relates be true."

Solomon walked about the room, and appeared at a loss what to say; at length he resumed, "You know dis young man, and vash vary intimate vid him?"

"I was," replied Freeman.

"Are you any ting related to Shir
Charles

Charles Freeman," said Solomon, "were de young man vash taken to?"

"I am his nephew," replied Freeman.

"Perhaps," continued he, "you are that friend who sent a messenger to him at Cliffdown-lodge to warn him of his danger, and therefore are unwilling to trust me."

"Vary possible," replied the Jew; "de times ish vary bad, dere ish no knowing who to trust."

"I will, if possible, ensure your confidence," resumed Freeman, "by relating more particularly my reasons for enquiry. Theodore has ventured to address my cousin, the daughter of Sir Charles; now answer me, was my family insulted by his conduct or not?"

"Ah, poor lad," cried the Jew, "I thee how it ish wid him; vat vid pershe-cution

cution on von shide, and love on de oder, de poor boy will break his heart. And sho your cousin, believing vat Sht. Aubin told her, informed him vere to find him."

"My cousin," replied Freeman, "would not be guilty of such a transaction."

"I know better," rejoined Solomon; "it was through her the boy vash taken to-day, and de poor lad knows it."

"If my cousin," rejoined Freeman, "said any thing to St. Aubin that injured him, it was innocently done on her side. But come, I see you are Theodore's friend; let me have an answer to my question."

"Did he not tell you," said the Jew, "dat he had a fader and a moder alive? and should not he consult dem?"

"How is this!" cried Freeman; "St. Aubin says he is a child of charity, and
you

you seem to infer that he has parents, whose advice ought to be asked whether he should marry the daughter of Sir Charles Freeman."

"Shay no more," cried the Jew; "vat Mr. Sht. Aubin hash told you ish vary true. Mr. Sht. Aubin ish my vary goot friend; vould you have me lose my friend?"

"I see how it is," resumed Freeman, "you still doubt me."

"Can you keep de shecret?" said the Jew.

"Depend upon me," cried Freeman eagerly.

"Den sho can I," rejoined Solomon.

"Very well, sir," said Freeman, "since you will not explain, I will try what success I can meet with from St. Aubin. I
am

am determined to know if Theodore be guilty or not, and what is become of him."

"Hold," cried the Jew; "you musht not mention any ting to Sht. Aubin; you musht not shtee him. Vat, I shuppose you vill tell him about de meshenger I shent; you vill ruin de poor boy. I vill speak ash plain ash I can: if you meet de poor lad, give him your hand; he hash a vary goot heart."

"I do not doubt it," replied Freeman, "and that would be a sufficient recommendation to me; but he must possess some other requisites before I permit him to be acquainted with my cousin on the former footing. Of what family is he? what are his expectations?"

"I shtee how it ish," cried the Jew;
 "you

“you vant to know about de monies. Dere is no knowing people now-a-days; Here vash a great housh failed de oder day. People who we tink is wort a hundred toufand paunds are wort noting. I really cannot tell you.”

“You will not tell me,” rejoined Freeman.

“You are vary rude,” cried the Jew. “You shee my shituation, and yet you teash me: ’tish not like a shentleman. I cannot trusht a shtranger.”

“Answer me this question, and I will ask no more,” resumed Freeman; “where is he?”

“I vill write to Mr. Somers,” replied Solomon, “and if he tinks it right to tell you, I shall den have no objection.”

Freeman thanked him.

“Remem-

“Remember,” said the Jew, “not von vord to Sht. Aubin, nor to any von dat vill tell him.”

Freeman assured him that he might firmly rely on him, and then departed.

CHAP. XI.

THE moment Freeman returned, Augusta requested he would acquaint her with what information he had obtained.

"You are certainly right," said he, "in your conjecture: Theodore is not the character St. Aubin represents him." He then related the principal part of the conversation that had passed.

"You astonish me!" said Augusta. "What a mysterious business! — But pray," continued she, "what account did he give of his being taken to-day?"

"He informs me," replied Freeman, "that he was apprehended in consequence

quence of the intelligence you conveyed to St. Aubin."

"Edward," said Augusta, "do not wound my feelings: can you suppose I would endeavour to injure him?"

"I remember," resumed Freeman, "you told him that he was at the town of Maidenhead in the afternoon; and you may recollect St. Aubin immediately left us, pretending he had some business with a gentleman who was to leave town early in the morning. No doubt he sent in pursuit of him, and has, through the knowledge of this circumstance, been able to take him. The Jew declares that you had an ill opinion of Theodore in consequence of St. Aubin's representation, and that you informed him where he was to be found, on purpose to have him

him taken: and this he further says, Theodore is made acquainted with it."

"Edward," said Augusta, "have compassion on my feelings: think what passes in my breast during this recital!—Get me a glass of cold water."

Freeman instantly obeyed.

In a few minutes she proceeded.—
"What will Theodore think of me?—First, my letter to Clarissa, calling him a villain; and afterwards to act on this principle!—Where is he?—Can I write to him, or can you write?—I never can endure that he should harbour this ill opinion of me."

"I know not where he is," replied Freeman; "the Jew refuses to inform me."

"Then write a letter," resumed Au-
VOL. III. L gusta,

gusta, "stating the particulars, and give it to the Jew; he will forward it to him."

"Are you not aware," rejoined Freeman, "that this would be going too far? Consider for a moment your situation, and then I am confident you will not request it. The Jew promised to acquaint Somers where he is; I shall take the earliest opportunity of requesting Somers to acquaint me with his address. It is now too late to send a letter, but I will write by to-morrow's post, and we shall have an answer on Monday. I shall then see Theodore; he will naturally mention the circumstance to me, which will put it in my power to explain the truth, without wounding your pride, or lessening you either in his estimation or your own."

Augusta

Augusta saw the necessity there was for adopting this plan, and as no other alternative presented itself she was obligated to submit.

Time now passed heavily on, and every hour appeared an age, both to Freeman and Augusta, till they should receive a letter from Somers.

The day arrived on which Freeman expected an answer to his letter concerning Clarissa ; but he was disappointed.

A thousand times he determined to set off for Bristol ; but Augusta prevailed on him to defer his journey till Monday, as most probably Somers had not received his letter in time to answer it by return of post.

At length the wished-for Monday arrived, and with it the letter ; of which the following is a copy :

L 2

‘ DEAR

DEAR FRIEND,

THE intelligence conveyed by your letter, respecting my beloved Louisa, greatly surprises me. It was my intention to have troubled Sir Charles with this unpleasant business, but am sincerely happy you have offered to take it on yourself, as I consider you far more capable of carrying it into effect, according to my inclinations, than he would be. Augusta will possibly have an opportunity of ascertaining my Louisa's sentiments: if she should, and they are consistent with my wishes, there will, I hope, be no occasion to use compassion, unless the Sternholds should venture to oppose her coming. Lest this should be the case, I have inclosed you an authority. Remember, Freeman, to use it with discretion: you are not apprehending

' hending a deserter, but restoring a wife
 ' to the bosom of her partner. Consider
 ' you have the soul of Somers in your
 ' possession. Excuse this caution; think^y
 ' what it is to feel as I do, and let iⁿ
 ' plead my apology. d

' Nothing should have prevented me^t
 ' from being in town at the interview,
 ' but the truly unpleasant business I am
 ' engaged in, and which I will, at some
 ' future opportunity, unfold to you.

' You say you have particular reasons
 ' for enquiring where Theodore is to be
 ' found, and that his friend would write
 ' to me.

' I have received no letter from any
 ' friend of his. I certainly do know
 ' where to find him; but he has bound
 ' me by a solemn promise to inform no

one of his residence, not even Augusta, think then if I can with honour give the information you require.

Respecting Clarissa, I did not receive your letter in time to answer it by return of post. I am all anxiety on her account, as I expected she would have arrived here prior to this period. The only address I received from her was the Gloucester coffee-house; at which place she does not reside, as she informed me she would either call or send for the letter I might write.

Convey my best wishes to your amiable cousin, and request her, for my sake, to use her influence with Louisa, that she will remain with her at your aunt's till it is convenient to undertake the journey; and rest assured I remain
with

‘ with sincerity your friend, and greatly
 ‘ obliged, &c. &c.

‘ CHARLES SOMERS.’

The enclosed authority was worded as
 follows :

‘ To Edward Freeman, Esq.

‘ I HEREBY authorise and empower
 ‘ you to take the person of Louisa Somers,
 ‘ my wife, and Louisa, my daughter,
 ‘ wherever they may be found, and to
 ‘ convey them to Cliffdown-lodge, near
 ‘ Bristol, in the county of Gloucester;
 ‘ for so doing this shall be your sufficient
 ‘ authority.

‘ CHARLES SOMERS.’

Freeman, having perused the letter, de-
 livered it to Augusta, and immediately

purfued his way to the Gloucefter coffee-house.

He was there informed a young lady had called for a letter, but had not fince been near the place, nor could they give any intelligence of her.

Vexed at this difappointment, he fat down and wrote a few lines, defiring if fhe fhould call, they might be delivered to her.

In this letter he expreffed his own and Augufta's anxiety on her account, apologifed for the error that had induced his coufin to leave fo fevere a note for her at Maidenhead, and to request fhe would immediately fly to her on the receipt of it, at the fame time giving her addrefs.

Having left this letter, he returned with an aching heart to Augufta.

The day at length arrived that brought

Mrs.

Mrs. Sternhold and her daughter to Mrs. Seaton's, accompanied likewise by the child.

When Louisa entered the room, Augusta attentively surveyed her. She appeared extremely pale, and a languid melancholy was visible in her countenance.

She called to her recollection the portrait she had seen at Cliffdown-lodge, and compared it with the emaciated form before her; from which comparison it was evident Louisa was either in an ill state of health, or that a never-ceasing sorrow, equal to her husband's, was preying on her existence.

After the ceremony of introduction had passed, "Your daughter," said Mrs. Seaton, addressing herself to Mrs. Sternhold, "appears much altered for the worse ;

it really concerns me to see so great a change."

"Do you positively think so?" said Mrs. Sternhold. "I had flattered myself she improved."

"Far from it," resumed Mrs. Seaton, who pursued this conversation merely to estimate Louisa's sentiments. "I am afraid her mind is not at ease, and if that be the case, it is not in the least surprising."

"My daughter," rejoined Mrs. Sternhold, "has been extremely ill treated by one of the worst and most infamous of his species; but time, I hope, will teach her to despise him, as I do."

Mrs. Somers now drew out her handkerchief to wipe a tear from her eye, that the recollection of past events occasioned; and

and Mrs. Sternhold giving a turn to the conversation, the subject for the present subsided.

Augusta was anxious to have it revived, but had not the courage to introduce it; at length an accident of a trifling nature afforded her the wished-for opportunity.

She had been perusing the letter from Somers, and when Mrs. Sternhold's name was announced, she put it hastily in her pocket.

During the evening she drew out her handkerchief, and the letter was brought out with it, which fell at the feet of Mrs. Somers, who picked it up and presented it to Augusta; but having cast her eyes on the direction, she knew the handwriting.

Her countenance was immediately co-

vered with a crimson blush, and was succeeded by a pale languor, which obliged her to have recourse to her smelling-bottle.

Freeman noticed it, and thinking it a favourable opportunity to begin the conversation, "Augusta," said he, "you should take more care of your letters: I have no doubt but that is an epistle from some enamoured swain."

"The person," rejoined Augusta, "this letter came from is certainly enamoured, but not with me: the man is unfashionably in love with his wife."

"I beg your pardon," resumed Freeman; "I now conclude it is a letter from Mr. Somers: had I known it, I should not have made a jest of so serious a subject."

"What is this?" rejoined Mrs. Seaton;

ton; "who is Mr. Somers that you are speaking of?"

Freeman replied by relating his story, as far as it had come to his knowledge; y dwelt with great force and sympathetic energy on the affection he possessed for Mrs. Somers, and the effect it had on his health; recapitulated his having witnessed his sorrows in the Temple of Solitude, in which place he had the portraits of his wife and child, to whom he paid his earthly adoration; and concluded with a severe animadversion on the conduct of those who had estranged his wife's affection from him.

Louisa, unable longer to sustain her feelings, burst into tears.

Mrs. Sternhold, who had listened in silence to the recital, now turned pale with anger; her eyes darted fire while she

she uttered, "I know the villain you are speaking of; he has grossly imposed on you. If he had the affection for his wife which he pretends, why does he not claim her? You must know he has the power in his own hands, if he thinks proper to exercise it; instead of which, now he has the means of rendering her every comfort, he has basely deserted her."

Freeman was willing to rescue the character of his friend from the imputation, and therefore replied, "Whatever may have been his reasons for not demanding her heretofore, I cannot pretend to determine, but he has now changed his mind, and means to take her to himself. If you will peruse this paper," continued he, shewing her the order, "you will have no farther occasion to vilify her on that account."

Mrs.

Mrs. Sternhold perused it: "Here is a cruel monster!" cried she; "no sooner does he taste of prosperity than he wishes to deprive me of the only comfort of my age, by tearing my daughter away from me." Then starting up, "Louisa," cried she, "we are betrayed!—I should not have visited here, if I had thought such an unnatural plan was in agitation."

Mrs. Seaton entreated her to be pacified, and represented the impropriety of her conduct in endeavouring to separate a party that were evidently attached to each other: but it was all to no purpose; she insisted on Louisa accompanying her.

In the mean time, Augusta requested Mrs. Somers would retire with her, as she wished to have a few minutes' conversation alone.

Mrs.

Mrs. Sternhold opposed her; but Louisa, having heard the sincerity of her husband's attachment, no longer submitted to control, and taking her child, attended Augusta to another apartment.

Augusta produced the letter which Somers had sent, as likewise the one she received from her father.

Louisa perused them, and then exclaimed, "Ah, my God!—how have I been imposed on!—How shall I ever be able to venture into his presence!"

"Fear nothing," rejoined Augusta; "you will find him far more inclined to forgive than you can be to ask it. Let me hear what your intentions are."

"To fly to him this instant!" replied she. "Had I known he desired my company, no persuasion whatever should have kept me from him."

"How

"How happy," resumed Augusta, "will your presence make him! You see, by my father's letter, he does not desire you should relinquish your friends; his house will be always open to them, when they are inclined to treat him as your husband." Augusta then offered her protection, and promised to attend her to Cliffdown-lodge; at the same time adding, she should be happy to place her amongst the number of her friends.

Louisa thanked her for the offer, which she accepted; and testified the pleasure she should receive in her society.

At this period Mrs. Sternhold, whom neither Freeman or Mrs. Seaton could pacify, entered the room.

Augusta acquainted her with the fixed determination of Louisa.

Mrs. Sternhold appealed to her daughter

ter for the truth of it, who answered in the affirmative, and requested that her wardrobe might be sent to Mrs. Seaton's.

Mrs. Sternhold refused, and quitted the house, declaring that Mr. Sternhold should pursue such means as would put a stop to her journey.

Augusta endeavoured to compose Louisa, who was extremely hurt at the conduct of her mother; promised to supply her from her own wardrobe with whatever she might stand in need of, and appointed the Thursday following to leave London.

Mrs. Somers, in proportion as she heard the virtues and amiable qualities of her husband extolled, felt ashamed of her past conduct.

She informed Augusta there never was
a total

a total want of affection for her husband ; that she had been taught by her parents to lament her having married a person who, they alleged, took her for interested motives ; that this, together with a variety of arguments made use of by them, which she should blush to mention, had sometimes occasioned words to drop from her which were uttered in haste, and without a serious meaning ; but that Mr. Somers, whose disposition was calm, attended to them as the result of cool deliberation, and upon these words had withdrawn himself.

She declared her life had been a scene of misery from the hour he departed, which departure, she was taught to believe, originated in a dislike he had to her society.

That she had heard of the great addition

tion made to his fortune ; which circumstance considerably increased her happiness, as she concluded it afforded a strong proof respecting the truth of what her parents had advanced, or otherwise he would have demanded her ; and that these ideas had preyed on her existence, which was evident from her altered appearance.

Augusta congratulated her on her approaching happiness ; and won by the contrition she manifested for her neglect of Somers, as likewise by her appearance, which evidently testified what her sufferings must have been, no longer viewed her in an unfavourable light, but considered her as an unhappy character, who had been wickedly misled by those whose duty it was to have taught her differently. She saw that Somers and his wife were both

both objects to be pitied, both having had their peace of mind destroyed through the pride and inveteracy of the Sternholds.

Augusta having viewed Louisa in this altered light, now felt for her that friendship which before she merely offered; she looked forward with anxiety and pleasure to the moment when she should, by restoring her to her husband, complete her happiness, as likewise the felicity of Somers, who so justly merited her esteem.

On the following morning, as they were sitting at breakfast, a servant entered, and informed them that Mr. Sternhold would be happy to speak with his daughter.

Mrs. Somers rose, for the purpose of hastening to her father; but was prevented by Mrs. Seaton, who desired the servant

vant to shew him into a parlour, and she would wait on him.

Mrs. Seaton followed in a few minutes, accompanied by Freeman, and finding he had come for the express purpose, if possible, of taking her back with him, Freeman acquainted him that she had set off early in the morning for the country, and that he had better apply to Mr. Somers for her, under whose protection she would be by the following day.

Sternhold appeared disconcerted on the receipt of this intelligence, and asked who accompanied her.

Freeman replied, she was accompanied by his cousin Augusta.

Sternhold, having learnt these particulars, retired, with a firm determination following her; thinking, if she should sleep upon the road, as he was led to conclude

conclude she would by the information he had received, that he should probably overtake her before she reached her husband, and prevail on her to return with him.

Freeman, suspecting his intentions, resolved on taking a different road, through Oxford and Malmesbury, instead of Reading and Marlborough, by which means he should avoid him.

Mrs. Seaton ordered her post-coach to be got in readiness early in the morning, that they might not be necessitated to part with Freeman's society; but late in the evening he having gained intelligence of Clarissa, and likewise his father having arrived at Mrs. Seaton's, he was necessitated to postpone his journey.

Louisa, who was anxious to see her husband, did not permit this circumstance
to

to have any weight, and therefore left town at the appointed time, accompanied by Augusta.

I shall now leave them to pursue their journey, and likewise Freeman to follow Clarissa, while I attend to what was passing at Cliffdown-lodge.

CHAP. XII.

»

ON the following morning after the arrival of Bridport and his daughter, Somers waited on Sir Charles to solicit him in their behalf.

He represented the sufferings of Bridport in their true light, and was able to prevail on him to promise the same farm which he before occupied, as it had not been disposed of.

“As to the daughter,” said Sir Charles, “I think we can make Sir Thomas allow her something handsome; four or five hundred pounds will be a pretty fortune: she may with that, as she possesses a large share of beauty, meet with some reputable

able young farmer, with whom she may live tolerably happy.

“ These things, you know,” continued he, “ happen every day.”

“ Sir Charles,” resumed Somers, interrupting him, “ I must particularly request you will leave this affair to my management. If you mean to assist the father with the farm, I must not have it clogged with any conditions respecting the daughter.

“ Sir Thomas shall come to some settlement with me concerning her.”

“ Why,” cried Sir Charles, “ what do you want him to do? Is it not sufficient if he give her enough to procure a good husband?”

“ If that,” resumed Somers, “ could restore her to happiness, I should be content with it; but I am of opinion Sophia

Bridport

Bridport has an unalterable attachment for him : how, then, do you think it possible she can consent to marry another ?”

“ You do not imagine, I hope,” cried Sir Charles, “ that Sir Thomas will be prevailed upon to marry her ?”

“ I do not mean to force him,” replied Somers, “ because I am satisfied, in contracts of that nature, no force should be used ; otherwise I certainly would compel him : and, if he refused, I would assist Bridport with money to prosecute him. But such is not my intention, unless he object to my proposals, which are these : As you have promised Bridport the farm, Sir Thomas shall furnish him with stock and implements the same as he possessed prior to his seizing on his property ; and as he has destroyed the happiness of his daughter, and put it out of her power to

marry, he shall settle upon her an annuity of one hundred and fifty pounds per annum. When he reflects upon the ruin he has brought on that family, I think he cannot refuse the condition. If he should, he must, and shall, take the consequences."

"Give me leave to say," returned Sir Charles, "that this conduct of yours differs materially from your general practice. I have hitherto observed, you have always pleaded something in mitigation of the offender, that he might thereby escape punishment: with respect to Sir Thomas, you plead nothing in palliation, but seem actuated by a motive of revenge."

"You are wrong," replied Somers. "If I were actuated by revenge, I have ample means in my power: on the contrary,

contrary, what is it I ask of him, but to replace Bridport in the farm? Can this, or a trifling annuity (which he would gladly settle on her if she would live with him) injure materially his fortune? or can this trifling compensation make them amends for the irretrievable misery he has occasioned?

“If I were to commence a prosecution against him, he would forfeit half his fortune to get rid of it. View it in this light, and you will think differently. The characters I have generally pleaded for, have not had the means of making the most trivial compensation to the injured party; if they had, and refused so to do, you would not have seen me as their petitioner.

“I am afraid,” continued Somers,

“ you plead in his behalf with the idea of his shortly being allied to your family ; but that, I am confident, will never take place : and you must pardon me when I say, I do not think you ought to promote it, after what you have heard, and know to be true.”

“ Sir Thomas,” rejoined Sir Charles, “ has certainly mentioned such a circumstance to me, and I could have been more happy, if he were less deserving of censure ; but if he should make the compensation you propose, the evil will be partly gone away, and then I do not see what objection I ought to have. He has been guilty of a few fashionable follies ; and where am I to find the man that has not ? As to your being confident it never will take place, I am aware you fix your
opinion

opinion from what my daughter has advanced; but she shall find I am not to be thwarted."

At his juncture a letter arrived from Mrs. Seaton, which acquainted him with the refusal of Augusta to Sir Thomas, and of his determination never again to trouble her.

Mrs. Seaton farther observed, that Sir Thomas was not in the least hurt by the refusal, but appeared happy it had afforded him an opportunity of relinquishing his pretensions; and added, that something certainly affected his spirits, which Augusta concluded must be the loss of Clarissa or Miss Bridport, whom he was most probably gone in pursuit of, as he left town the same day.

Sir Charles gave the letter into the hand of Somers, observing, if his sister's
suspicious



suspensions were really true, Sir Thomas was a worthless character, and had used him unlike a gentleman.

Somers read the letter: "Well, sir," said he, "I hope you now are satisfied; you will approve of my plan respecting him."

"I not only approve of it," replied Sir Charles, "but will forward it as far as lays in my power: and when I seriously consider the injury he has done to Bridport's family, I think we ought to make him double the annuity; it may serve to warn him against similar practices for the future."

Somers was not at a loss to account for the alteration in Sir Charles's sentiments; an alteration which would appear surprising, had he not read the contents of the letter; but he did not think proper to

to notice it, contenting himself with observing, as the punishment even then was by no means adequate to the offence, he should think himself justified in insisting on it.

Somers now took his leave, and returned to his house, where he acquainted Bridport of the success he had met with.

“ Mr. Somers,” cried Bridport, “ you are unacquainted with the feelings of a father : I thank you for your application to Sir Charles ; but I can take no compensation from such a villain as Sir Thomas.—no ;—let the event be what it may, I will punish him to the utmost rigour of the law. Such a monster is not fit to live.”

“ If we were to punish all those who lay themselves under the lash of the law,” resumed Somers, “ we should have enough

to do. I can readily plead an excuse for this revengeful language; but, in my opinion, there would be no excuse were you to put it in practice.

“ I am not one of those,” continued Somers, “ who could feel a pleasure in the death of a fellow-creature, and this must be the consequence if you succeeded. Let me ask, what real happiness it would produce to you? Can it restore your daughter’s honour?—can it restore peace either to her mind or yours? On the contrary, you would have moments when the blood of a fellow-creature would lay heavy on your mind. In such moments it would afford but a small consolation to reflect that he deserved it.

“ Instead of delivering a man over to punishment, we should endeavour to reform him, both by precept and example.

One

One man thus saved, reflects more honour on the human race than a hundred others life destroyed.

“ When I consider the many follies and atrocities men are daily guilty of, it shocks my heart to hear them talk of prosecution. If God were not more merciful to us than we are to each other, we should have but a small hope of happiness hereafter.

“ As to your eating the bread earned by your daughter's prostitution, in that you are likewise wrong.

“ If Sir Thomas should place you in the situation you were before, it is no more than an act of justice, and what he ought to do if he had never seen your daughter; and as to his allowing her an annuity, what can he do less? She might have been happily married, and thereby have

obtained the means of existence. He has by his conduct deprived her of this resource: is it not, therefore, perfectly consistent, that he should make such an allowance as will afford her the means?"

"I think not," replied Bridport; "it is the wages of dishonour."

"Thus speak the world in general," resumed Somers, "but I differ with them. Suppose a man were, by taking away your character, to deprive you of the means of obtaining your bread; ought he not to allow you a sufficiency, in return, to make up the loss you had sustained?"

"The comparison is not good," replied Bridport; "and if we argue to eternity, we shall never agree upon it. My unhappy girl is of the same opinion as you: she does not approve of adopting coercive means against Sir Thomas: but I am inclined

clined to think her motives originate in an affection she still has for the villain; and if I were positive this is really the case, never more would I enter into her company."

Somers endeavoured to soften the asperity of Bridport by every argument he could make use of; but the other declared it was of no use, his mind, he said, was made up.

On the close of the following day Sir Thomas sent in his name, and requested to speak with Somers. He had left London upon receiving a denial from Augusta, and proceeded to Reading, where, by minute enquiry, he had been able to trace the route of Bridport and his daughter to Cliffdown-lodge.

Somers was not in company with Bridport when the message was delivered, he
therefore

therefore went out, and conducted him to a private apartment.

“ I understand,” said Sir Thomas, “ Miss Bridport is with you ; can I see her ? I have a proposal to make that will certainly be agreeable to her.”

“ Whatever proposal you intend making,” replied Somers, “ must first be considered by her father and myself, therefore state it.”

“ You appear extraordinarily cool,” resumed Sir Thomas ; “ from whence can this originate ? If I have injured Miss Bridport, I am willing to make her all the reparation in my power.”

“ Need you be surpris’d,” replied Somers, “ after your infamous conduct to Miss Lesley ?—But you are hardened in vice ; and even what you have now to propose in behalf of Sophia originates

in fear, and not through a sense of the impropriety of your conduct."

Sir Thomas appeared thoughtful. After a pause: "Mr. Somers," said he, "I will throw myself upon your generosity. I have acted highly improper, and am willing to make atonement.

"I will restore the father to a situation equal to the one I deprived him of; and as to the daughter, she shall live with me upon the same terms as a wife, and share my fortune. If it so happen that I should ever marry, I will then settle three hundred a-year on her."

"I did not think," resumed Somers, "you could thus deliberately have insulted me. What part of my conduct authorises you to expect I will be a pimp to your private pleasures? Can I attend
to

to such a proposal ; or can I request her father's consent to his daughter's prostitution ? I am shocked at your depravity, independent of the insult you offer me."

" My dear fellow," cried Sir Thomas, " pardon me ; I really did not mean to give offence. What would you have me to do ? Sophia cannot be injured by it ; I shall effectually shield her from want. As to submitting the proposal to the old man, it is entirely out of the question ; he will certainly wink at what he cannot publicly approve."

" Well, sir," resumed Somers, " I will undertake that your proposal shall be accepted, so far as relates to the father ; but you must settle three hundred a-year on the daughter, and never see her more."

Sir Thomas laughed : " You are certainly

tainly mad," cried he; "or you think I have taken leave of my senses. I positively will agree to nothing till I have her back again."

"Then, sir," resumed Somers, "you must take the consequences."

"And what are these?" cried Sir Thomas.

"A prosecution," replied Somers, "for the infamous method you adopted respecting her."

"By Heaven!" rejoined Sir Thomas, "if I thought her capable of such a transaction, she should do it, and I would expend the last shilling of my fortune to defend myself. She knows little of me, if she supposes I will be forced to any thing."

"I do not say," resumed Somers, "that she would approve of such a procedure:

cedure : I am afraid she has not yet been able to do away the regard she has so long had for you : but in this case she must submit to the will of her father."

" If you think," rejoined Sir Thomas, " she has still an affection for me, why not restore her? But, to put it out of your power to say another word,^o and to convince you of the impropriety of your conduct, I will shew you a few lines she left for me."

He then produced the paper, and the song left on the piano ; which Somers read.

" This does indeed convince me," cried Somers ; " but not as you would wish it. It makes you appear in a far worse light than before. You have injured a worthy girl, who loves you to distraction, notwithstanding your ill treatment ;

ment; but this I partly knew from her own confession."

"You did!" resumed Sir Thomas: "she is wondrous kind, to make you her confidant; and I do not doubt but you will find her grateful. You are a happy fellow, to have always one fine girl or other under your protection. I suppose you will be taking her to your temple of Solitude: a very convenient spot! and in the arms of one, you may learn to forget another."

"Your insolence," replied Somers, "is intolerable; and as I cannot submit to a repetition of it, I will send her father to you: he is the most proper person to answer you on the subject."

Sir Thomas caught hold of his arm: "Pray excuse me," said he; "I am half mad!—What shall I do?—I cannot exist without

without her!—Positively, I will double the annuity, if that will content her!—Never, till I lost her, did I know the value of her.”

Somers appeared surprised: “What is the meaning of this!” said he; “whence originates this sentiment! Is it possible you have a serious affection for her?”

“Believe me, Somers,” cried Sir Thomas, “my heart and soul is wrapt up in her; therefore, tell me the terms, and I will agree to them.”

“Marry her,” replied Somers; “for on no other condition will I surrender her to you.”

“Marry her!” exclaimed Sir Thomas; “you certainly are not serious. What, marry a farmer’s daughter, after she has lived with me in a certain capacity!”

“Marry the object that you love,” resumed

sumed Somers: "her living with you was your fault, not hers; and if it reflect disgrace on you, it must be your punishment; for on no other terms will I restore her, and therefore I wish you a good morning;" at the same time ringing the bell, and desiring a servant to attend him out.

"Will you attend to reason?" cried Sir Thomas.

"I have told you my determination," replied Somers, "and can add nothing further."

"Then," before I submit," resumed Sir Thomas, "I will suffer myself to be cut in pieces."

Sir Thomas now left the house, and Somers returned to Bridport with evident discomposure; but did not think
proper

proper to relate the business he had been upon.

At this juncture Theodore arrived, in a state of the utmost anxiety, on account of the singular adventure he had met with in London; and greatly oppressed in his mind at the recollection of the intelligence he had received of Augusta's being the person who had lodged the information against him.

He had no knowledge of Mrs. Seaton, nor of St. Aubin being acquainted with her, and therefore was unable to draw any other conclusion than that she had been to Mr. Quibble's, and by him referred to St. Aubin.

This supposed conduct of Augusta lessened her materially in his estimation; and when he recollected the apparent anxiety she had professed for his welfare,
by

by warning him against meeting Freeman, who vowed to be revenged on him for his supposed misconduct respecting Clarissa; but which he now concluded was on Freeman's account, lest he should sustain an injury by the meeting; he looked upon her as a complication of cruelty and deception, and unworthy of that affection which he entertained for her person.

It was late in the evening when Theodore arrived at Cliffdown-lodge. He knew the way through the garden, and therefore walked till he reached the door, and having knocked, he requested the servant to inform him if her master was alone.

The servant replied, he had a lady and gentleman with him.

“ Then

“ Then say to him,” resumed Theodore, “ a gentleman would be glad to speak with him.”

The servant went to her master, and delivered the message.

“ What gentleman ?” cried Somers, rather warm : “ is it the gentleman that was here before ?”

The servant replied in the affirmative.

“ Then tell him,” resumed Somers ; “ I am engaged, and cannot now attend to him.”

The servant returned with the answer, which greatly disconcerted him ; he therefore requested pen, ink, and paper, and sitting down, wrote a few lines to Somers, returning him thanks for his former kindness ; expressed his sorrow that he should experience a conduct so reverse to what
he

he had hitherto met with from him; but concluded it must have arisen from some misrepresentation, that time alone would do away.

In this note he enclosed twenty pounds, the amount of what Somers had assisted him with; and having left five guineas with the servant, desired she would convey the note to her master, and then walked towards the post-chaise.

The servant immediately delivered the note, which Somers read with evident surprise, and turning to the maid, hastily enquired where Theodore was.

“Gone,” replied the servant.

Somers started from his seat, overturned his chair, and reached the chaise on the moment it was setting off.

“Heavens! Theodore?” cried Somers,

“ what must you have thought on receiving such a message from me ? I really imagined it was Sir Thomas.”

Theodore found there had been an error, and immediately alighted from his chaise, while Somers pressed his hand with a pleasure that shewed how happy he felt on meeting him again. Then taking him into a private room, acquainted him with the company he had in his house, as likewise the occurrences that had happened during his absence, together with his anxiety on his account.

Theodore, in return, related his journey to and from London, and the singular adventure which obliged him to quit it ; concluding with some severe remarks on the conduct of Augusta ; which Somers

mers endeavoured to do away, by relating a part of what passed between them after Theodore had quitted the place.

But neither this, nor any thing Somers could advance, was able to obliterate it from his memory.

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